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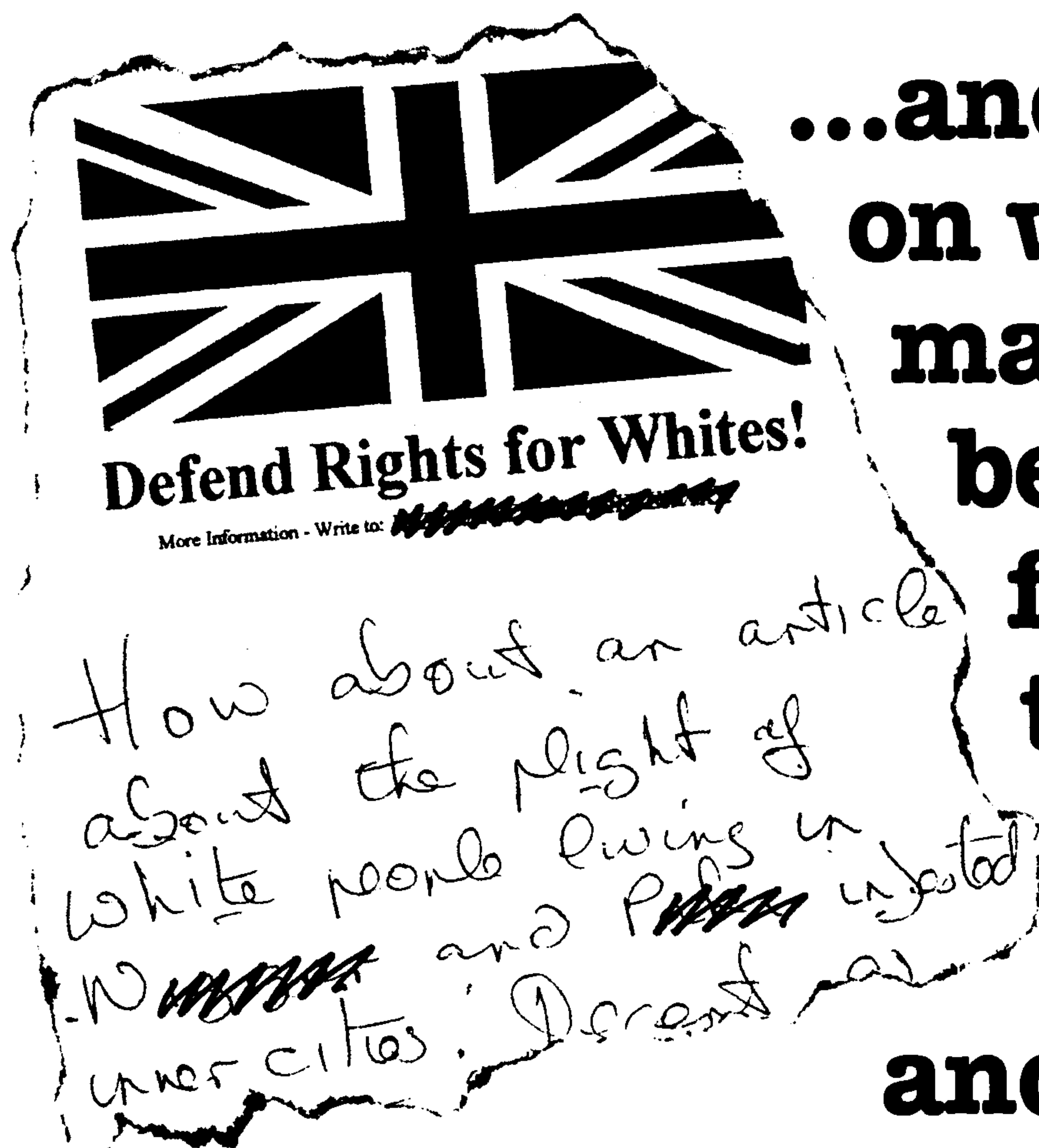
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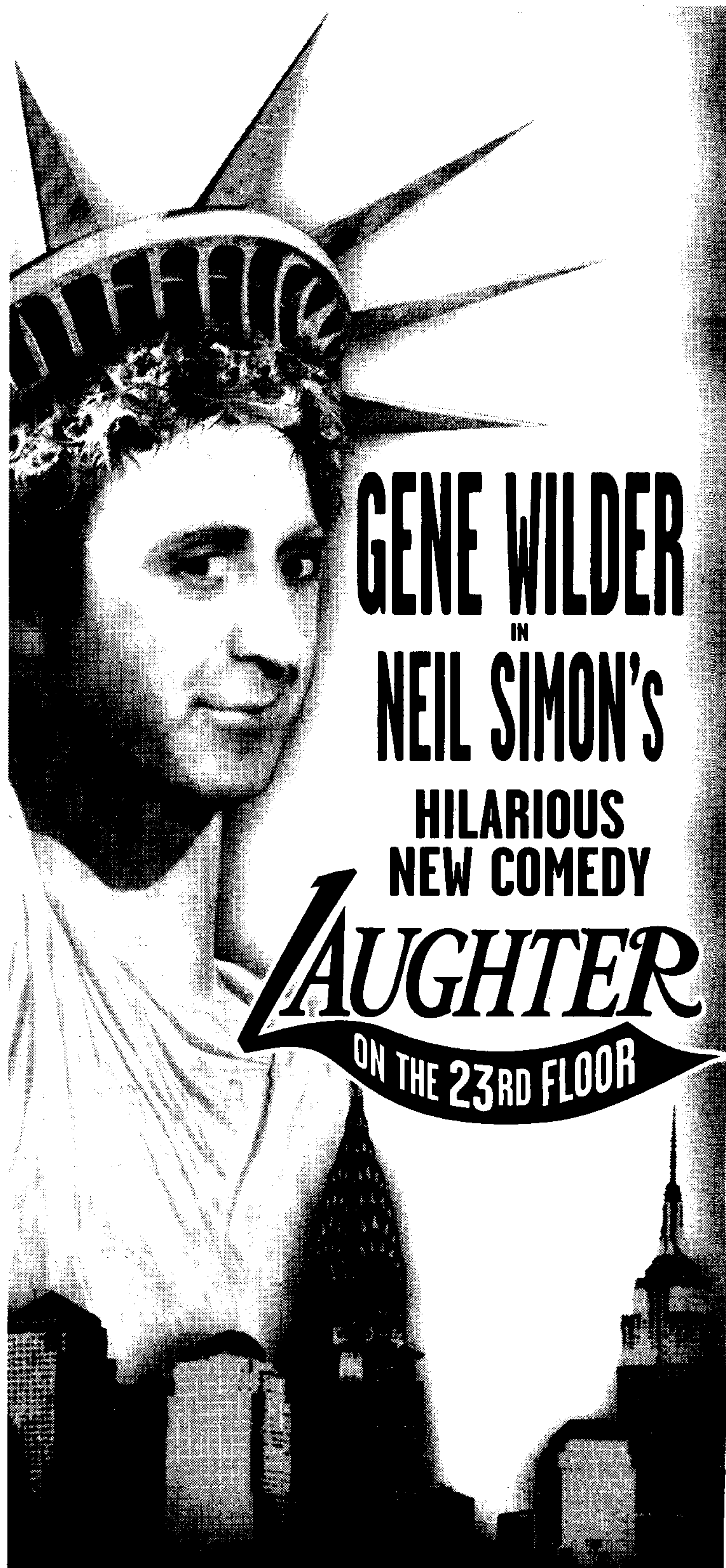


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Gnome

THE Labour Party is finished. I know this for a fact because I read it in all my own newspapers this week. The *Daily Gnomograph*, *The Sunday Gnomograph*, *The Gnomes*, *The Gnomes on Sunday* and *The Gnome* are all agreed — the attempt by the Labour Party to distance itself from the Trade Union Movement is the most sensational own goal by Tony Blair to date and one from which he cannot possibly recover.

For years I and (by coincidence) my newspapers have argued that the greatest electoral liability to the Labour Party has been their unpopular relationship with the Unions. The spectre of a Labour victory with the power-crazed Union barons returning us to the dark days of the Winter of Discontent has been one which I have consistently evoked: unburied rubbish, rats piled high in the street, corpses out on strike. We all remember how it was.

Now the Labour Party has suddenly decided that it is going to cut its links with the Unions and develop independently.

What a stupid idea! What a demonstration of incompetence! What an inept move from a group of idiots!

There can be no doubt now that Labour are definitely going to win the election. (*Shurely "lose"?* E.S.)

E. Stobes

Lord Gnome

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NOW that the victory of Sir Jammy Fishpaste's Referendum party is assured by the addition of zoo-keeper John Aspinall to its candidates' list, Jammy is checking his members more carefully.

He has hired a security firm, Resolution Security, to examine the political records of potential members to guard against extremist infiltration. Perhaps the *Eye* can help...

Back in May the *London Evening Standard* announced that Ian Fotheringham, 67, a former Conservative councillor and captain in the Honourable Artillery Company, was a Referendum candidate. What the *Standard* did not mention was Fotheringham's one-time leadership of the extreme right-wing Camberley Group, an outfit which abortively tried to take over the Conservative Monday Club in the early 80s.

Meanwhile the more moderate wing of Goldsmith's party is attracting Young Conservative and Federation of Conservative Students members of the hang Nelson Mandela era. For example, the *Eye* revealed (895) that Dougie Smith, who cuts a high profile in the party, was unfairly sacked years ago as an officer of the Federation of Conservative Students on the grossly unfair grounds that he was not actually, er, a student.

Now Dougie has been joined in the Referendum party by Marc Gordon, another former FCS luminary who once headed the well-funded International Freedom Foundation, a bureau promoting the virtues of P.W. Botha's regime and its stooges. The presence of these rightwing activists, with contacts in the Conservative party, might cause concern for Goldsmith's party. After all, it was only two years ago that Major's conference was marred by a publicised outbreak of YC kilt-lifting. This October, as Sir Jammy stands poised to unveil his own election candidates at his own party conference, he must hope his ragtag crew of young former Tories behave better.

"IN 14 years of being a member of parliament I have never found a trough big enough for my snout." Thus did Neil Hamilton, the unutterably witty Tory MP for Tatton, delight dinner guests on 12 September after a conference on international corruption and crime at Jesus College, Cambridge.

In a more serious tone, Hamilton then told his audience that the only real corruption in England was not in politics but in the press. Hence his determination to take the *Guardian*, the epitome of the corrupt liberal press, to the cleaners for libel.

One news item which will certainly be mentioned in the tasty libel action was published in the *Eye* in January 1984 (issue 577). This printed in full a letter to the lobbyist Ian Greer from the then Labour MP for Derby South, Walter Johnson. Johnson, who had helped Greer's client, Associated Octel, reminded Greer: "I have always been available if you wanted and this position still prevails."

Moreover, Johnson reminded the lobbyist: "You agreed to pay me for services to your company and this would be paid in the form of paying a bill for a holiday." Johnson, then and now, freely admitted to taking money from Greer. "It was a chance to earn some extra cash," he told the *Eye*, adding: "Nothing wrong in that".

The *Eye* then mentioned in passing that Greer was "very close to right-wing MPs Neil Hamilton and Michael Grylls". This bland comment provoked an instant letter from Hamilton to the *Eye* praising Ian Greer Associates as "an excellent firm offering an excellent service to the client companies lucky enough to retain it". On the other hand, he insisted, although he had worked with Greer for Associated

COLOUR SECTION

Octel, which had a plant in his constituency, he had "never received a penny piece" from Greer. Whether this penniless state continued after 1984 will be a matter for investigation in the libel trial.

Prime minister John Major is still trying to get out of appearing as a witness in the trial which falls at a most inconvenient time for him — slap in the middle of the Tory party conference. But only Major can properly inform the jury about the mystery of Hamilton's sudden resignation as trade minister at a time he was insisting he would stay. The *Financial Times* suggested at the time that Major raised with Hamilton his declaration of an association with Plateau Mining, a firm associated with Butte Mining, which was then under investigation by the serious fraud office. How, Major is supposed to have asked, could Hamilton stay on as trade minister when he had been associated, however distantly, with a firm under investigation by the SFO? Could this be true and what happened to Butte Mining? Only the prime minister can give satisfactory replies.

WHY was it announced that Margaret Thatcher had accepted an invitation to speak to the extremely right-wing Monday Club when she had not?

Step forward Andrew Rosindell, pit bull terrier-owning Tory candidate for Thurrock in Essex, who can lay claim to the embarrassing gaffe.

What Thatcher accepted was Rosindell's invitation to speak to a dinner of the European Young Conservatives, of which he is chairman. But wearing his other hat, as a leading member of the Monday Club's executive council, Rosindell then sent out leaflets announcing that "The Freedom Dinner 96" was presented by the European YCs in association with the Monday Club — an association of which Thatcher's office was completely unaware.

Excited Monday Club members would have been delighted by the invitation and perhaps convinced that their normally ineffectual officer team had pulled off a master stroke.

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"Of course Tony isn't ditching socialism — he was never a socialist"

BIRT & CENSORSHIP

SINCE the spring of 1994 *Private Eye* has run 17 stories about the case of John Gorman, the former policeman who complained about British Airways and was then subjected to a prolonged, abusive and violent campaign of harassment.

Not a single complaint or even a solicitor's letter has been received from British Airways, the Metropolitan police — to whom many of the abusive and foul-mouthed calls to Gorman were officially traced — nor from anyone else.

Now the *Observer* reveals the pulling of a programme made at great expense for the BBC's *Newsnight*, which shows how the harassment campaign has continued over the last year. The *Observer* suggests what everyone connected with the programme knows: that it has been axed on the order of director-general John Birt, who, the *Observer* also reveals, is a close friend of British Airways managing director Robert Ayling.

Someone very high up in the BBC, disgusted by this exercise in blatant censorship, leaked a 1994 memorandum from Birt to the head of news and current affairs Tony Hall, complaining about *Newsnight*'s previous programme on the Gorman scandal.

The memo whined about the use of footage from the Brighton bombing of 1984 (in the wreckage of which Gorman, then a police officer, scrambled frantically all night); about a harmless and entirely accurate piece of reconstruction; about the use of a witness, entirely legitimate; above all about the naming of individuals high up in British Airways (including Ayling).

"There seemed to be no sophisticated understanding of how institutions work... The item made me uneasy," drivelled Birt, without ever revealing his close connection with the British Airways management: a declaration of interest which would certainly be expected of any public figure in similar circumstances.

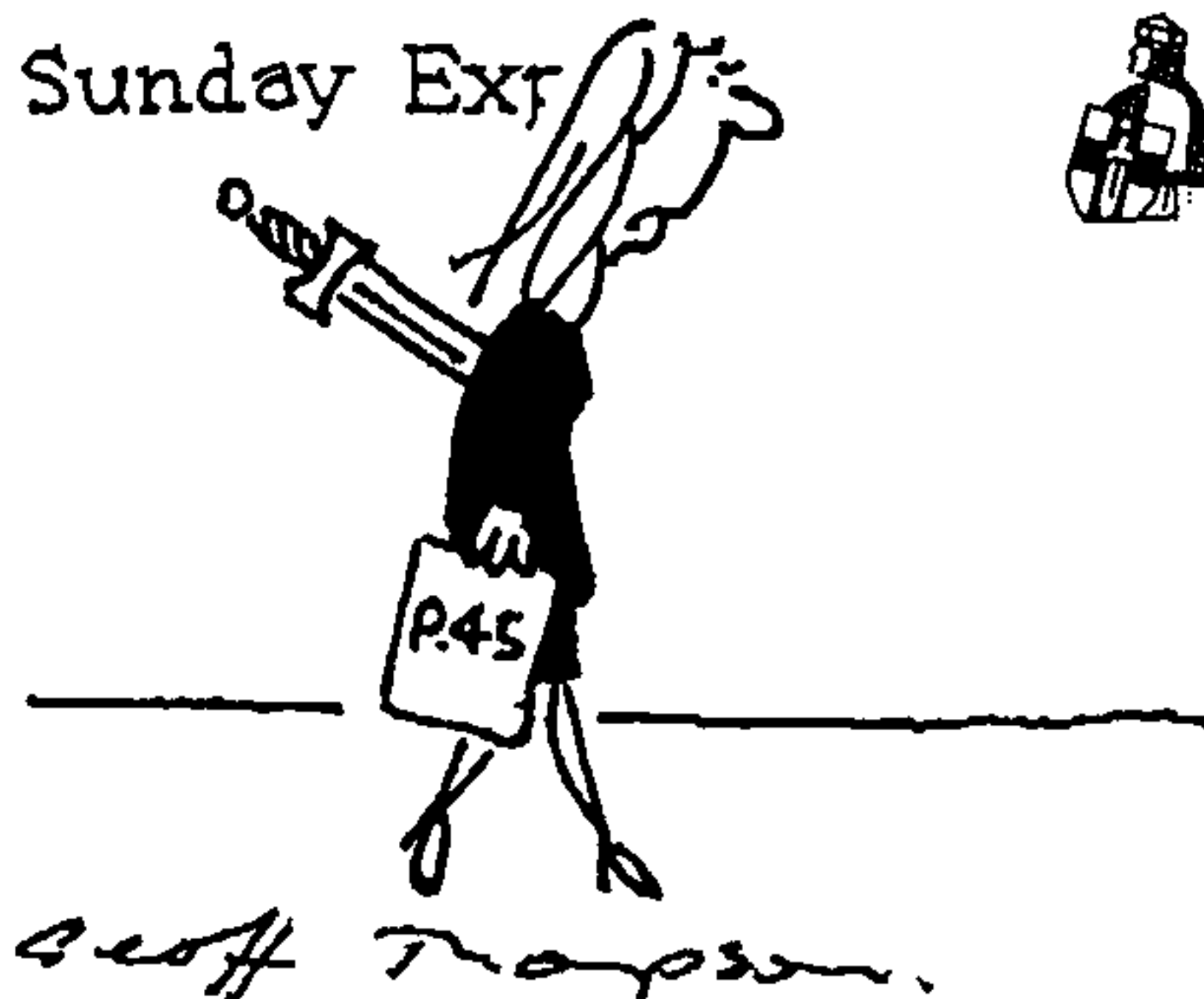
After the stinging memo to Hall, the making of the second *Newsnight* programme on Gorman was subjected to almost continual harassment from on high. At every stage scripts were demanded and doubts expressed. It was cut and cut again. Finally, the BBC lawyers approved it. Nevertheless, the script was sent out again, to Harvey Starte a junior barrister in the big libel practice of 1 Brick Court. Starte's opinion was equivocal. He thought some individuals (all of them mentioned in previous *Eye* pieces without any complaint) might have a reasonable case in libel, but equally might not be keen to sue. That was enough for Birt and the BBC bosses, who promptly pulled the whole project: £100,000 of licence-payers' money had been wasted on exposing a scandal involving Birt's close pal, which will now not be exposed.

Street OF Shame

MAYHEM reigns at the Grey Lubyanka following Lord "Alco" Hollick of Notting Hill's decision to merge the *Daily* and *Sunday Express* under the command of ex-monk Richard Addis.

Sue Douglas, deposed editor of the *Sunday*, assumed the blow would be cushioned by a £350,000 pay-off to which she is contractually entitled. But the miserly Hollick has so far refused to give her a penny, arguing that if she wants the dosh she will have to sue for it. Similar messages have been sent to several of her senior colleagues on the assumption that they won't be able to afford a lengthy lawsuit.

Hollick, however, had reckoned without the wily Sir David English, boss of Associated Newspapers. While luring Douglas's deputy, Ian Birrell, to the *Daily Mail*, he offered an irresistible extra inducement: the *Mail* would provide its finest lawyers, free of charge, to enable Birrell to pursue a case for unfair dismissal against the *Express*.



Having thus assured his future, Birrell was in no mood for polite small-talk when he was summoned to see Hollick and Addis, who desperately wanted him to stay. "What the fuck are you doing?" he asked Hollick. The nervous peer turned sheepishly to Addis, murmuring: "I think Richard can answer that." Addis had other ideas. Hurling his pen down on the table, the normally mild-mannered editor let out a despairing howl: "I'm sick of being asked all these questions!"

Meanwhile views vary of Hollick's first round of asset-stripping: disposing of 85 journo's and their salaries. He thinks this will make the papers stronger; but many in the City think it will simply

make the bottom line of the accounts more attractive, whatever it does to circulation. As Lex, the *FT* columnist, put it: "Somebody may even be interested in buying them."

That somebody is expected to be Associated's Sir David, who will "merge" the *Express* titles with the *Daily* and *Sunday Mails* — ie shut them and make the other 200 or so hacks redundant. The *Daily Star* will then go to Rupert Murdoch, to bolster the circulation of the *Sun*; and the whole operation will make the Napoleon of Notting Hill even richer.

Hollick's chairman, meanwhile, Lord Stevens, has been busy elsewhere, according to Hollick's new hatchet man, editorial director Stephen Grabiner, accompanying his wife's neurotic pet dog to the canine psychiatrist. It appears the mutt developed an unhealthy, if understandable, aversion to his lordship and the "therapy" requires Stevens to stand for considerable periods in the beast's basket.

THE *Sunday Express* has, as usual, been leading the field in its incisive reporting on the difficulties at unit trust operators Morgan Grenfell, where rogue fund manager Peter Young cost his bosses around £300 million thanks to his predilection for investing in companies of his own creation.

"His fall from grace is a disaster for the City," trumpeted Lord Hollick's *Sunday* organ. It is also a disaster for the *Sunday Express*.

Just two months earlier, on 7 July, Peter Young and Morgan Grenfell were being hailed by the paper following the *Sunday Express* Fund Manager of the Year Awards, which were presented at a "gala evening" at the Royal Albert Hall. He was given the European Fund Manager award.

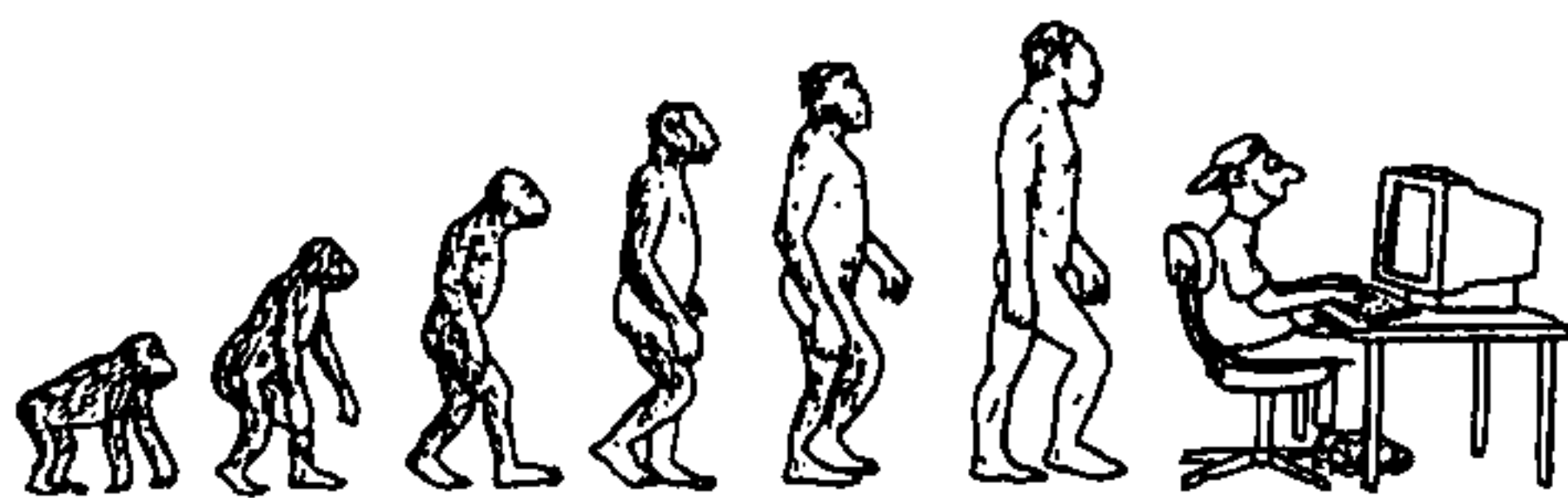
Morgan Grenfell was voted "the best unit trust group", while Young, whose personal assets are now frozen by a court order, was saluted as "a brilliant stock picker" with an "exceptional" long term performance. So enthusiastic was the *Sunday Express* that it printed Young's phone number so its readers could send their cheques to his firm. "The winners are, we believe, the best in their fields," concluded the *Sunday Express*.

DAILY MAIL staff hardly recognised their smarmy editor Paul Dacre when he returned from holiday — not because he was so tanned but because his hair had apparently turned black overnight.

Cowed staff did not dare comment on his dyed locks, but in his first editorial conference conversation turned suspiciously quickly to the Church of England's latest "hip" adverts.

"What do they say?" Dacre asked one of his minions.

"They ask are you 'Having a bad hair day?'" came the reply to barely concealed sniggers.



DIRTY ANORAKS 2

FOLLOWING its "exposure" of child pornography on the internet, the poor old *Observer* is now heading for the most embarrassing climbdown since the *Sunday Times*'s "Agent Boot" fiasco.

In its original front-page story last month, the *Absurder* named two figures as ringleaders of the kiddie-porn trade in cyberspace. One was Clive Feather, a director of Demon Internet. The other was a Finnish computer consultant, Johan Helsingius, who until a fortnight ago ran a non-profitmaking "remailer service" on the internet. This allowed short e-mail messages to be sent while protecting the anonymity of the sender. Among its many users were Amnesty International, the Samaritans and, ironically, the West Mercia police, who used it as the basis of their "Crimestoppers" scheme.

As revealed in the last *Eye*, Clive Feather and Demon are preparing to issue writs. Now

Helsingius has also announced his intention of suing.

It should be an interesting case. For Helsingius had configured his remailer specifically to prevent exactly the kind of misuse the *Observer* alleged. Pictures encoded as messages were filtered out, any postings to the groups were blocked, and a limit was imposed on the size and frequency of messages. In addition, he monitored anyone who tried to circumvent these controls: out of a hundred attempts to make postings to child porn groups this year, none had succeeded. Helsinki police have confirmed that no paedophile porn has ever been traced to Helsingius's remailer.

Interestingly enough, the *Observer* isn't Helsingius's only persecutor. He is also up against the Singapore government, which has demanded the identity of one of the 500,000 users of his database. The unknown miscreant, who has the e-mail address an511172@anon.penet.fi, posted hundreds of messages to the soc.culture.singapore newsgroup under the pseudonym "Lee Kwan Yew". Although the messages were short and unimaginative, they have infuriated the country's thin-skinned officials, who are determined to punish the culprit in the traditional Singaporean manner.

Another of his enemies is the Church of Scientology, which recently persuaded a Finnish court to force Helsingius to reveal the identity of ex-Scientologists who were posting secret documents from the Church on the internet. It was

because of this ruling that he decided to close the service down altogether. Helsingius is, to put it mildly, rather surprised to see Britain's oldest liberal newspaper allying itself with the government of Singapore and the Church of Scientology, neither of which is famous for its commitment to liberal principles.

What does the *Observer* have to say for itself? In a desperate attempt to substantiate its sensational allegations, it ran an interview with one Toby Tyler, who was described variously as "an FBI adviser on child abuse and pornography" and "Toby Tyler of the FBI". His comments on Helsingius were damning indeed: "Somewhere between 75 and 90 per cent of all the child pornography I see is supplied through this remailer."

Alas! It turns out that Tyler is not an FBI employee at all, but a lowly sergeant in the sheriff's department of San Bernardino County. Worse still, he claims the newspaper entirely misrepresented his views. "There's very little of the story I agree with," he said last week. "I said that most child pornography posted to newsgroups does not go through remailers." In fact, he "absolutely" supports the existence of anonymous remailers.

With the main plank of its defence gone, the *Observer* is now looking for an out-of-court settlement. Unfortunately, no one appears to have told Dean Nelson, the paper's news editor, who was still maintaining last week that he "stands by everything [his] reporters have written".

Street OF Shame

Continued

NO SOONER had William Rees-Mogg bemoaned the decline in City standards in his piss-poor *Times* column — noting that “the responsibility comes back to the directors of the investment companies concerned. They tend to be too remote from the actual investment process” — than the shareholders of GEC turned up for Lord Weinstock’s final agm as chief executive.

After paying tribute to his record, company chairman Lord Prior apologised for the way the appointment of GEC’s new boss, George Simpson, had been handled. GEC’s institutional shareholders had even threatened to vote against the appointment because of his crazily over-generous pay package, which was way out of touch with the going rate, even though it had been approved by GEC’s allegedly independent remuneration committee.

Prior and Simpson agreed to tear up the original package and start again. Sadly there was no word on this from the out-of-touch chairman of the remuneration committee — one Lord William Rees-Mogg, who let Prior do the grovelling.

HOW delightful to see a feature on “favourite African places by African writers” in the *Financial Times*’s weekend supplement, “How To Spend It”, on 7 September. And how clever of the *FT* to avoid using a single black African writer, preferring to rely on old white colonial types such as Richard Leakey and Sir Laurens Van Der Post. Incidentally, the editor of “How To Spend It” is Lucia Van Der Post — Sir Laurens’s daughter.

LAD journalism hit a new high when *Louder*’s Martin Deeson attended the UK music industry’s seriously inebriated In The City gig at Dublin’s Temple Bar theme park.

According to bloodshot eyewitnesses, Deeson was already “merry” when he arrived at his hotel on the Friday afternoon and immediately took paranoid exception to a security camera he felt was “looking at him”. Leaping on to a desk, he yanked the camera from the wall, ran out of the hotel and threw it into the River Liffey.

Within hours Deeson was remanded in custody for the entire weekend on criminal damage charges. Released from the city’s Mountjoy prison after the intervention of *Louder*’s lawyers, he made an unbilled appearance at one of the event’s closing gigs to denounce the local justice system. This was greeted by jeering and led to Deeson having to depart in a hurry, pursued by members of the audience. Despite missing all the shows he’ll no doubt get a good article out of his, er, trip. And his expenses should make interesting reading, too.



“Take a letter, Miss Jones”

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN



HALLO! DEAR Lord Archer of Weston-Super-Mare, I fear, is suffering from Alzheimer’s, or senile dementia. Or is it simply a recurrence of Jeffrey’s longterm problem — short-term memory loss?

Last week the great storyteller’s chief public relations consultant, a Mr Nigel Pratt-Dumpster, announced breathlessly in the *Daily Mail* that 10 years ago his lordship bought 61 acres near Auckland, in New Zealand, for £400,000 — but now the Kiwis are hosting the ludicrous yachting competition, the America’s Cup, Jeffrey “stands to make more than £10 million”!

“Golly,” mumbled the modest novelist, “I’d totally forgotten all about my land.”

Odd. On 11 May 1995, he was babbling excitedly to Nigel: “It’s already appreciated 50 per cent and God knows what it will be worth if New Zealand wins.”

Simultaneously, Jeffrey had phoned several other national newspapers (“This doesn’t come from me, you understand”), even giving an off-the-record estimate to the *Daily Express* of profits between £3 and £5 million.

Knowing Jeffrey’s disinterest in squalid matters of finance, it is quite understandable the unworldly *homme de lettres* should forget such paltry sums.

HALLO! THE Nigel Lawson Diet Book, published next week, has already wrought such a miracle that it’s formerly very obese author was ejected the other day by one London cab driver, who feared Nigel was the victim of some beastly wasting disease!

The Marquesa, hailing this taxi near Westminster, was told by the impudent cabbie: “Didn’t recognise the fare at first, then I look in the mirror and it dawned. Maggie’s Chancellor of the whastit, the fat one. Gawd, he looks awful. Thin as a rake. So I pretend something’s wrong with my motor and turf him out. Well, can’t be too careful these days, eh?”

The lower-orders are so irredeemably ignorant. Nigel, a keen tennis player, started slimming following a knee injury, when his doctor told him: “How can you expect this small joint to hold up that great fat body?” The rest, as they say, is publishing history.

DANCER OF THE WEEK

HALLO! Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister, stunned guests at a 25th Wedding Anniversary with a pelvis-wiggling interpretation of Greased Lightning by John Travolta. The cows may be safe but Doug is a crazy guy!

HALLO! TO SOMEWHERE called Newcastle, with a newly svelte Duchess of York, who graciously opens a new £1 million family unit at the Royal Victoria Infirmary — and immediately demonstrates her unique common touch at the bedside.

“Hello,” cries the duchess gaily to a wee toddler suffering from a terrible brain disease “Do you read Budgie the helicopter?”

HALLO! DEPLORABLY while we celebrate Sir Edward Heath’s 80th birthday with joyous hosannahs, music critic Alexander Waugh regales friends with a story about Sir Edward’s ardent admiration for brilliant young German cellist Felix Schmidt.

Waugh, once Schmidt’s agent, claims in the relaunch issue of a magazine called *Punch* that Ted used to call the cellist up to ten times a day showering him with invitations and selflessly promoting his career — even making a celebrated recording of Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with him.

But Waugh leaves out his most ridiculous anecdote from the article — after one evening visit to Heath’s Wilton Street home, a distraught Schmidt apparently joined Waugh for a stiff drink in the Ebury Street Wine bar. According to his ludicrous account, he had just refused Heath’s requests to watch him and his girlfriend performing their best organ duets.

When the cellist declined the Grocer got bated, shouting: “After all I’ve done for you!”

Unfortunately the new *Paunch* magazine decided against publishing this jolly anecdote and changed Willie Rushton’s cartoon accompanying the piece.

HALLO! OLD Etonian Lord Vernon, now 73, will not I hope bother to read a distasteful new “novel” by someone called A.A. Gill who has produced *Sap Rising* a tale of masturbation, necrophilia, etc, in the royal borough of Kensington!

One of Gill’s main characters is Lord Vernon (of Barnstaple), an old poof (with, yes, a lisp), who enjoys troilism with such witty lines as “Oooh yeth, I’m coming,” and, “You take botty, I’ll take gobbles.”

The genuine (10th Baron) Vernon is of course irreproachable: Scots Guards, Colonial Service (Kenya), former JP and stalwart of Boodle’s. Happily, John is holidaying with second wife Sally in the Highlands, so is still unaware of Mr Gill’s atrocity.

HALLO! WILL Liam Gallagher, charming lead singer of a popular singing combo called Oasis, have any money left when he returns from his troubled tour of America?

Girlfriend Patsy Kensit has just sold her St John Wood home, where they lived, for £750,000 and they moved into nearby rented accommodation costing up to £2,000-a-week. Former neighbours from Hill Road estimate Liam’s “hobby”, whatever that is, costs up to £4,000-a-week. The pop star boasts he’s worth £2.5 million, which won’t last long at this velocity of expenditure!

HALLO! THANK Heavens that Richard Madely, who has been promoting his entertaining television show *This Morning* in Ireland, has a sense of humour.

Richard had arrived in Cork, where with his co-host and wife Judy Finnegan he was to join a gaggle of hacks on a booze-soaked PR excursion. Before breakfast, suave Richard was prevailed upon to bend down and kiss the Blarney Stone, which was still moist with the early morning dew. After posing for photographs, the PR caravan then made way for the first American tourists of the day and moved on.

Many hours and several Guinneses later, Richard found himself in a pub commiserating with locals over the loudness of the invading Americans. “Oh, we get our revenge,” winked one longtime resident, revealing how late at night local lads go down to the Blarney Stone and pee all over it. “Them Americans have no idea what they’re kissing first thing in the morning!”

‘The Marquesa’



“WHAT have we done to deserve this?” wondered one bewildered senior trade unionist as he surveyed the wreckage that was the TUC conference after “new” Labour’s thoughtful kite flying exercises of the past week.

First there was David Blunkett’s call for binding arbitration and his attack on trade union “armchair revolutionaries”, which mystified the brothers and sisters who, while spending much time sitting in armchairs quaffing pints of Boddingtons, only really experience revolutions when they stand up.

Blunkett’s tirade against “armchair revolutionaries” was placed in the distinctly union-hostile *Evening Standard*, but was sufficient to jog the memories of those comrades who remember the time Neil Kinnock tried to get rid of real “armchair revolutionaries” in the shape of the Militant Tendency, only to be faced down by — guess whom — David Blunkett.

Back in January 1986 Blunkett attacked those who would purge the “Hattonistas”, castigating “those in the party desperate to get rid of the Militant Tendency at all costs, and others equally desperate to cover up for them”. In 1985 he won a standing ovation at the Labour conference after offering Militant-controlled Liverpool city council a way out of its impasse with Kinnock.

Meanwhile Tony Blair appeared happy with Blunkett’s fumbling wrecking tactics, for they ensured that TUC general-secretary John Monk’s toadying “trade unions and stakeholding” speech fell off the news agenda altogether. The “dear leader” then demonstrated his hands off approach to the unions by demanding that the postal workers had another ballot, while his junior employment spokesman Stephen Byers was also busy kite flying, telling lobby journalists that Labour would dump the unions altogether should they persist in behaving like, well, trade unions.

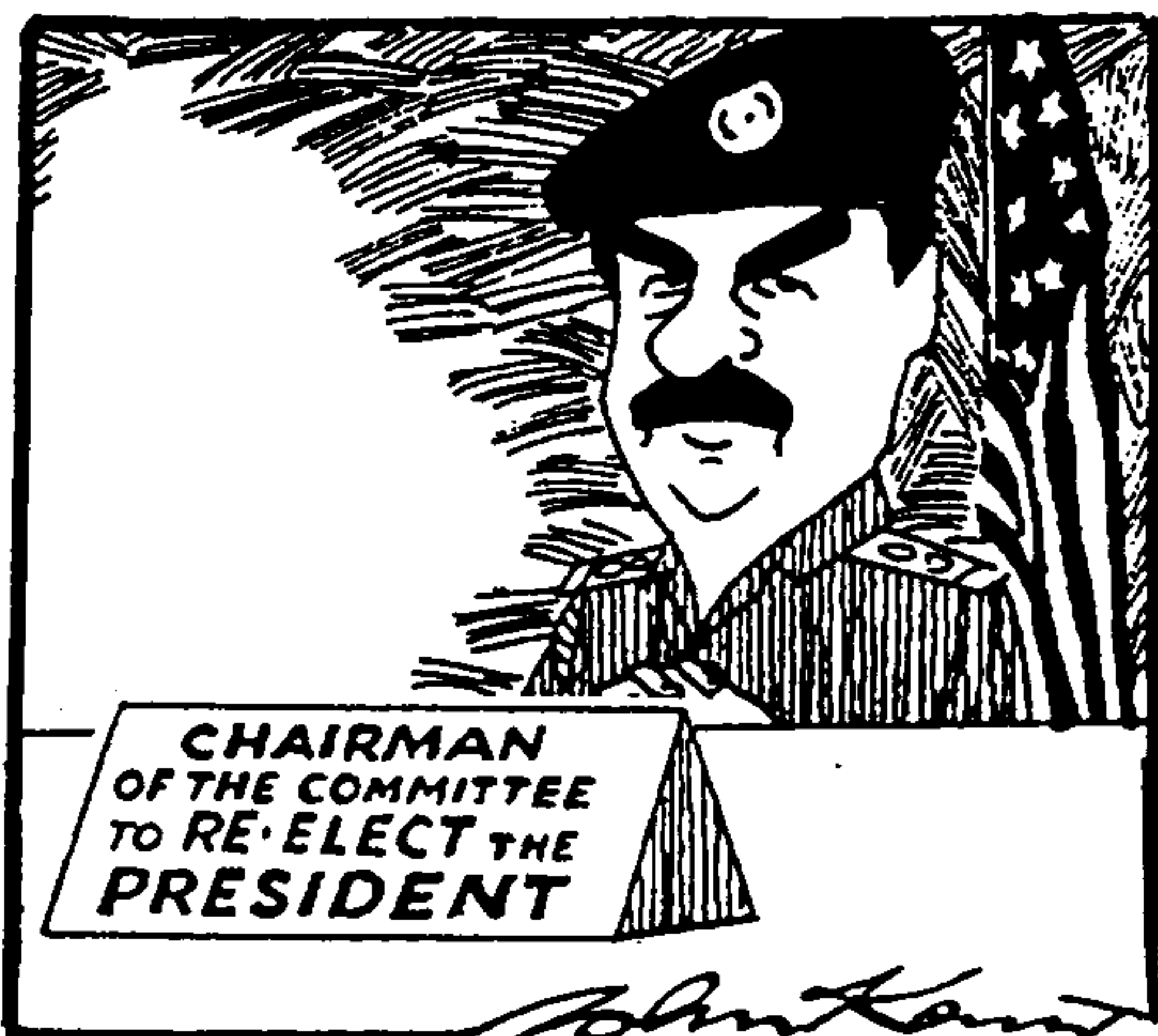
Elsewhere, at a separate training conference at a reeducation camp, Blairite Labour students were busy indulging in political role play games. One spotty youth was astonished to be asked to handle this hypothetical question by a party official: “How would you explain the reasons for ending the union link with Labour to party members?” Other Labour students were asked to inform on any colleagues who could be regarded as Trots “for our records”.

‘Rainsboro’

THE people of Worthing have been blessed with not one, not two, but three visits from heritage secretary Virginia Bottomley in the last six months.

The most recent was to the Worthing Chamber of Trade and Commerce, which was given a unique chance to ask Botters how money from the millennium fund could benefit the town.

Next time perhaps she will pop in to see how the Tory candidate for West Worthing is getting on — and check if her visits are helping the reelection chances of one Peter Bottomley.



NO ONE should have been fooled by Tony Blair’s “triumphant” tour of Scotland, which aimed to patch up Labour’s devolution debacle. Stage managed as ever, it was another victory for public presentation over political persuasion.

First stop was a newly refurbished Hamilton Grammar School where Blair expertly fielded impromptu questions from 16- and 17-year-olds. Er, no he didn’t. The questions had been screened by the school’s modern studies principal and faxed to Labour’s London HQ the previous Friday.

After shaking hands with members of the public — well, lots of local party members, anyway — he attended a public meeting in Aberdeen. This had been billed as a genuine public meeting, but the number of Labour activists strategically seated in the front rows to ask questions suggested otherwise.

NOR was the visit to Scotland by Michael Heseltine, deputy prime minister, more glorious.

No sooner had he arrived in Perth to address a Rally for the Union attended by Scottish Conservatives, than he started railing against Labour’s devolution policy, saying the party had entered “cock-up country”.

In fact the biggest cock-up of the day was Heseltine’s. Extolling the virtues of the Union he said the national curriculum was a great Tory achievement and an example of why the Union should be upheld. “The national curriculum was resisted, but we won,” he bellowed. “The proposals were resisted, but we prevailed.”

This caused Scottish Tories to squirm at Hezza’s ignorance: the national curriculum does not apply to Scotland, only to England and Wales.

ROWS over whose flag will appear on proposed new identity cards — should it be the Union Jack or the Euro-drapeau? — are a side issue: far more worrying is whose information will be used on the cards and whether it will be accurate or not.

One of the three types of ID card to be introduced would be the photocard driving licence for which information would come from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Its computer system has been contracted out to none other than the American computer giant EDS (see *Eyes passim*), and there are doubts about the accuracy of the information it holds.

When asked about the accuracy of its computerised information, the DVLA replied that this was a matter for EDS. Comfortingly, EDS then replied that it was a matter for... the DVLA.

PS: EDS has been awarded nearly 10 new government contracts since 1991 worth more than £1,700 million.

PPS: EDS’s most famous contribution to government agencies is the disastrous database for the Child Support Agency which contributed to faulty assessments and a backlog of 350,000 cases.

CAMPAIGNERS from the Network Against the Child Support Act have written to the two MPs who are consultants to EDS, the computer firm which manages the agency’s disastrous database (see *Eyes passim*).

They asked Niranjana Deva and Michael Stephen how much they were paid by EDS and any delegations they might have led in the House of Commons on behalf of the company. Deva stayed silent, but Stephen, the MP for Shoreham, was less reticent.

“I am not required by the Nolan rules to publish the amount of my remuneration,” he wrote back indignantly. And he went on: “I should be grateful if you would disclose whether you, or anyone connected with NACSA, has any connection with any company which has, or might, bid in competition with EDS” — still soldiering on, it seems, on behalf of his computer giant paymaster.

CONSERVATIVES in Islington North have produced a smug, highly partial public opinion “survey” seeking donations to party funds.

They boast: “We have low inflation, falling employment and rising living standards.” “Falling employment” is presumably a printing error.

‘Backbiter’

ART NEWS

TIM CLIFFORD, the flamboyant director of the National Galleries of Scotland, is not an easy man to embarrass. Having earned a slap on the wrist earlier this year for selling his private collection of Renaissance medals in apparent breach of the Museums Association’s code of ethics, he might have been expected to lie low for a while.

Not a bit of it. Last month he spent a lip-smacking £2 million of public money on a painting by the Italian artist Guercino — thus provoking a tremendous row about whether this was really the best way of apportioning the gallery’s overstretched funds. Now he has declared his intention of paying £600,000 for 57 works by the Scottish painter Alexander Goudie. The Goudie pictures, a sequence based on Robbie Burns’s epic poem “Tam O’Shanter”, have been described by Scottish art experts as “tourist kitsch” and “bloody awful”. Even his own curators told him the paintings were a waste of money.

So what is he up to? Clifford gave the game away with his announcement that the Goudies will hang in “the new National Gallery of Scottish Art in Glasgow”. No such institution exists. But Clifford — or “Tim O’Shanter”, as he is now known — is determined that it will. And he has two powerful supporters on his board of trustees: multi-millionaire banker Angus Grossart and business tycoon Lord MacFarlane of Bearsden.

When this unholy trio first cooked up their scheme for a Gallery of Scottish Art, back in the early 1990s, they met with almost universal condemnation — not least because their plan would have meant the closure of the well-respected Scottish Portrait Gallery. Besides, as several critics pointed out, Clifford’s own national galleries in Edinburgh are themselves meant to be a showcase of Scottish art, among other things.

In May 1994 the then Scottish secretary, Ian Lang, put the kibosh on this plan by refusing to contribute any government money towards its running costs. But Lord MacFarlane and Angus Grossart, like their chum Clifford, are not the sort of men who care to admit the error of their ways. They pressed on, and at the beginning of this year found the ideal site for their unwanted gallery — the old post office headquarters in George Square, Glasgow.

The GPO building is a huge mausoleum with 16,786 square metres of floor-space, more than one and a half times as big as all the buildings in Clifford’s present fiefdom — the National Gallery, the Gallery of Modern Art, the Portrait Gallery — put together. Since he has promised that the Portrait Gallery’s collection will stay put, this means he will have to fill the new building with the few hundred Scottish art works currently stored at the other two galleries — still leaving the Glasgow site with acres of empty space. Hence, perhaps, the sudden bulk-buying of Alexander Goudie’s second-rate daubs: never mind the quality, feel the width.

Clifford is alarmingly vague about the cost of converting the post office into an art gallery. At the beginning of 1996 he put it at £30 million; by March it had risen to £40 million; his latest bulletin quietly amends that to £49 million. If and when the builders ever do move in, the final fee is bound to be higher still.

Who will foot the bill? Although some money may be provided by the Scottish Development Agency and the European Regional Development Fund, they hope that the bulk of it — £30 million — will come from the heritage lottery fund. The lottery trustees will meet next month to decide whether to sign the cheque. One of those trustees, by a most happy coincidence, is none other than Lord MacFarlane of Bearsden.

If the project does go ahead, it will do wonders for the market in Scottish art, since there will have to be a hasty splurge of acquisitions. This is good news for the three main commercial dealers in Scottish paintings, who are as follows:

1) The Fine Art Society plc, based in London, whose chairman is Lord MacFarlane of Bearsden.

2) Roger Billcliff Fine Art, based in Glasgow, whose main shareholder is Lord MacFarlane of Bearsden.

3) Bourne Fine Art, based in Edinburgh, one of whose shareholders is Noble Grossart Ltd — the eponymous merchant bank run by Angus Grossart.

NOOKS and CORNERS

SO THE City of London is to get a 92-storey Millennium Tower, "a symbol of optimism, confidence and prosperity..." Yawn; it is the most boringly predictable architectural controversy of the year. It will be the tallest in Europe — Gosh! And the "architect" is Sir Norman Foster — What a surprise! Yet the newspapers and television think this is exciting; such is Millennium Madness, yet another example of a pointless celebration eliciting pointless, or pernicious, proposals.

Yet nobody comments on what is really remarkable — and sinister: that as we reach the end of this awful century, an indecent amount of international architecture patronage is controlled by a very large industrialised design machine fronted by a ruthless, psychologically challenged and upwardly mobile Mancunian Meccano enthusiast with a knighthood. And everyone just drools and simpers.

What is really interesting about the puerile Millennium Tower is the shameful *volte-face* about its site by English Heritage which I outlined in *Eye* 904. After the IRA bomb shattered its building, the Baltic Exchange was told by EH that it must be restored; but since the site was sold — at below market value — to Trafalgar House, Sir Jocelyn's quango has changed its mind and now longs for Sir Norman to get his thing up. Why? I hear the Baltic Exchange may sue if planning permission and listed building consent is granted; I hope it does.

BUT English Heritage can still do some things right. In *Eye* 905 I described how the London borough of Greenwich is happy to use compulsory purchase powers to tear down a swathe of historic buildings in the heart of Greenwich partly to facilitate the building of the Cutty Sark station on the Docklands Light Railway.

EH has written to the council warning that "we cannot

countenance the funding of public transport infrastructure by development which would otherwise be considered wholly unacceptable, and which is patently contrary to local and national conservation policies...

Should the council decide... to go ahead with the CPOs, English Heritage would have no alternative than to object in the strongest terms at the Public Inquiry. Quite right, too.

Yet despite this warning, the council is about to sign an agreement with the Light Rail Group for a commercial development which will include a station. And if it fails to deliver the whole block needed — bounded by Creek Road and Greenwich Church Street — by November 1997, it will have to cough up £4.4 million of council taxpayers' money as compensation for lost profits by a development consortium consisting of the Japs — Mitsui & Co. and Nishimatsu Construction — and "English Partnerships". Incidentally, a station as originally proposed, with minimal demolition, would cost less than £1 million. Are the councillors mad, or merely blinded by greed as well as blind to the beauty of the area they are prepared to sacrifice?

MORE on the race-loving Dean of Chester, the Very Revd Dr Stephen Smalley, who is longing to replace the ancient, undulating floor of Chester Cathedral, much of which is 18th century but some much earlier. He wants to put a new heating system under a new floor and, besides, tourists trip up on the old irregular stones and might sue.

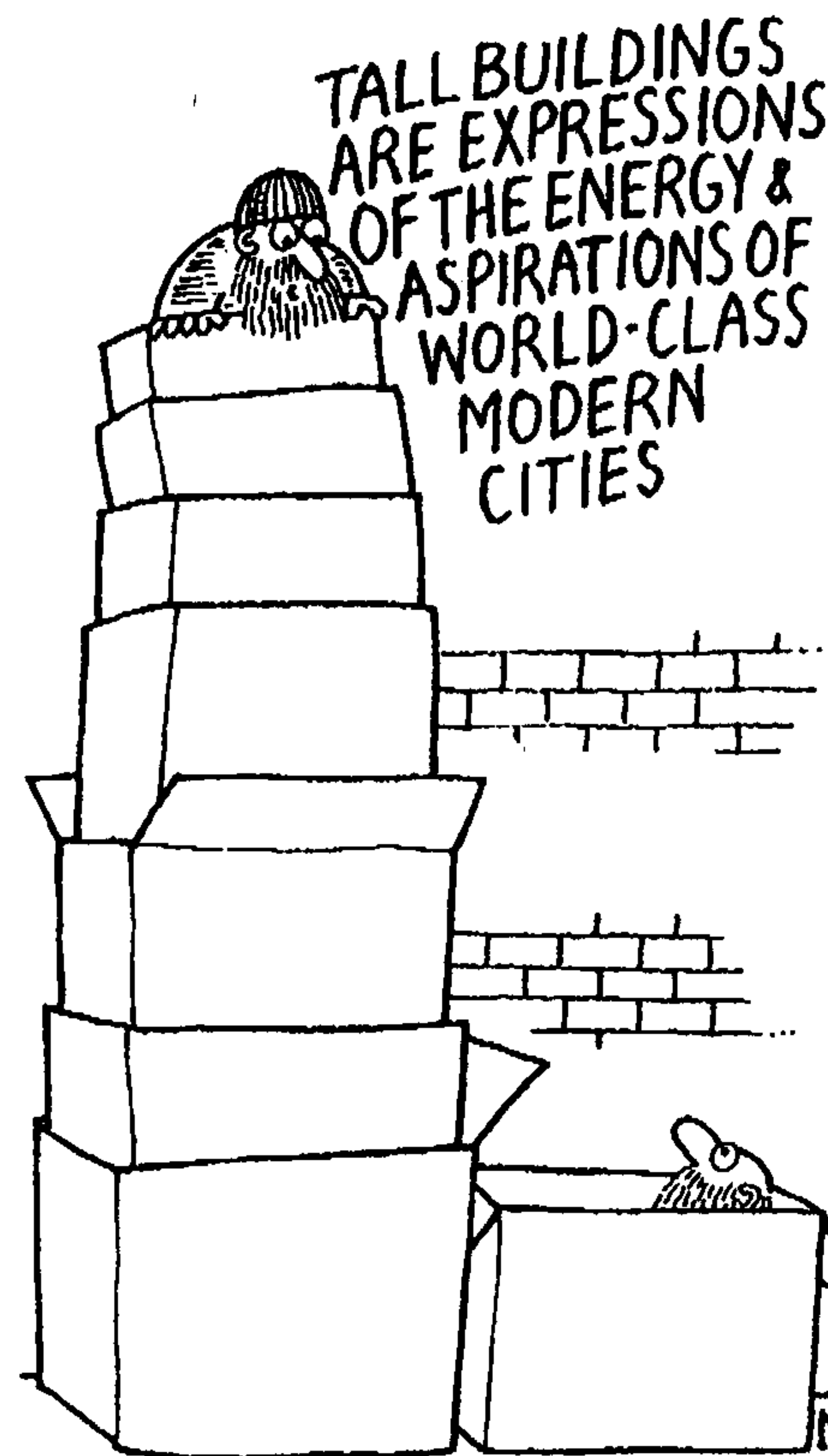
So the dean and chapter have now made a formal application to the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England to replace the floor of the nave and aisles. The cathedral surveyor Ronald Sims, that dim clone of the late George Pace, argues that only about 20 percent of the floor could be repaired and that most stones are too worn and irregular to save. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, on the other hand, is opposed to the renewal because "this worn and mellow floor gives an essential character to the Cathedral... [and] imparts a sense of history, adding great significance to the spirituality of the building". It argues that it can be carefully repaired using 70-80 percent of the original stones.

Now a new protagonist has entered the fray. Bearded Donald Buttress [*Eyes passim ad nauseam*], the first ever surveyor to Westminster Abbey to ask for a percentage fee on work done rather than accept a tiny stipend, has bounced in to comfort Sims — not-so-great minds think alike, after all. Wounded by criticism, Donald now detests conservationists as, believing himself to be the combined reincarnation of Michelangelo and Sir Gilbert Scott, he finds any check on his manifest creativity an affront. So the replacement of the nave floor is "totally justified... renewal in a more suitable material is long overdue and misguided antiquarian attitudes lacking historical justification should not now stand in the way of sensible action."

And with characteristic modesty, the egregious Buttress also opines that "the Cathedral is overall rather too 'pink' in tone and a different stone, possibly York stone, would be a better choice of material..."

Poor old Chester Cathedral: too pink, too old... Perhaps it should be entirely rebuilt by Donald Buttress, or, better, by Sir Norman Foster for the Millennium. How exciting that would be!

'Piloti'



BRITISH COUNCIL NEWS

For years the British Council in Spain, run from a prestigious 19th century building in Madrid, enjoyed an excellent reputation for its English language and business courses. But two years ago it saw a chance to cash in. It moved out of its city centre site at Almagro 5 and into a concrete lubyanka, putting Almagro up for sale.

The relocation cost hundreds of thousands of pounds, but that was seen as nothing compared to the millions the sale would bring. Alas, Almagro is covenanted and can only be used for educational purposes. Prospective buyers, mainly multinational companies wanting a prestigious Madrid address, have thus been unable to buy the building.

The feasibility of the sale was never fully investigated but was pushed through by the British Council in London and the Overseas Development Administration, both of whom saw an opportunity for a fast buck. Now they must pay relocation costs and for the maintenance on the Almagro building. How can they do it? By the usual method of redundancies among teaching staff, fee increases and bigger classes.



biliousness and a fear that anarchy is let loose upon the earth, when you tuck into a dish called 'Tournedos Boulez' at L'Espadrille Volent in Wisbech, served by a waiter who has head-butted the flaking plaster three times, before managing to unload his dumb *assistante*.

WILL SELF
Observer

Oh, Camilla, Camilla Parker-Bowles. Your name has such resonance, such plangency, unleashing as it does double-barrels of Englishness. I think of Parker pens and toilet bowls; and as for Camilla, it calls to mind those very genteel Englishwomen who bear a close facial resemblance to ruminatory animals.

WILL SELF
Esquire (US Edition)

It is impossible not to feel an ignobility of spirit, a reactionary

Pseud's Corner

My formerly smooth edifice of a body has been redeveloped with great balustrades and tiers of near-lithic fat. My feet have become but distant provinces. Datias and Hibernias, no longer answerable to the edicts issued by my mad Nero of a head. I require the assistance of a crowbar to pass through the doorway.

WILL SELF
Observer

The wine arrived. It was great; light, rounded, with bags of flower (pink lilies, carnations and sweet peas, to be precise). My soufflé was a tiny little, itty-bitsy baby of a thing. It was made using goats' cheese and this gave it a novel flavour. It also arrived on quite an aggressive bed of gem lettuce frisée that looked a bit like the kind of forest you have to hack your way through to reach Sleeping Beauty.

WILL SELF
Observer

Ah! When to the sessions of sweet silent thought we summon up remembrance of things past! I began to snuffle somewhat, recalling the carefree days of my youth, before I acquired the body form of a Weddel seal. The SO thoughtfully ordered a bottle of Chorey-les-Beaunes 1993 (Lite) to dilute my mood. This was fine, although a fly had insinuated itself into the bottle and rapidly adapted to its new environment by growing a minuscule tweed suit and joining the Garrick Club.

WILL SELF
Observer

His (Will Self's) use of language ranges from a high-flown literary style, rococo in its laterally associative twists, to a modern argot that captures a genuine linguistic pulse while underlining its distance from conventional mainstream English. His reaction to criticism of his work is characteristically defiant: 'I want to be misunderstood...'

PETER PARKER (Ed.)
The Reader's Companion to
Twentieth Century Writers

CONTRIBUTORS: M. Carlson (twice), E. Gittins, E.R. Carter (twice), I. Morland.

£10 paid for entries

LIVE

**Dangerfield
(BBC1)**

OF ALL the extraordinary developments in television in the past few years, the one no one predicted was the renaissance of the BBC drama department.

While ITV drama has ossified, with ever longer runs of *Heartbeat* and *London's Burning* commissioned to cover up a breathtaking shortage of ideas, the BBC has enjoyed a string of popular successes. *Ballykissangel*, *Hamish MacBeth*, *BUGS*, *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates* and *Dangerfield* have all cleaned up in the ratings, and several other series have ticked along nicely.

Credit is hard to bestow individually, not least because virtually everyone involved has already claimed a generous share of it; but the consensus is that the BBC has finally tapped into the qualities that have traditionally distinguished ITV's popular dramas: high production values, starry names, fast-moving plots, a leavening of humour, beautiful locations. Not every series has all five, but very few prosper without at least four.

Dangerfield appears to be the exception. It has its starry name — Nigel Le Vaillant, who came to national prominence as the Doctor With The Cocked Eyebrow in *Casualty*. It has fair production values — *Dangerfield* lives in a large house, drives a Range Rover and often turns up at the scene of expensively staged accidents. But never, in three seasons, has it en-

joyed a fast-moving plot. Humour is but a distant dream, long abandoned by most regular viewers. And the beautiful locations — the series is set somewhere in the rural Midlands — are undermined by the regrettable fact that few of us outside the rural Midlands believe such a place exists. *Dangerfield* drives down leafy B-roads past twittering robin redbreasts nestling in giant oak trees, but we all know that in real life he would be stuck in a jam on Spaghetti Junction munching a pork pie.

Other shows beset by such structural weaknesses would probably rely on the charm of the leading actor, but Le Vaillant gives no quarter here either. *Dangerfield* is a dashing and attractive doctor, constantly pursued by women. Nonetheless he is a miserable sod, whose natural expression is a slightly bored scowl.

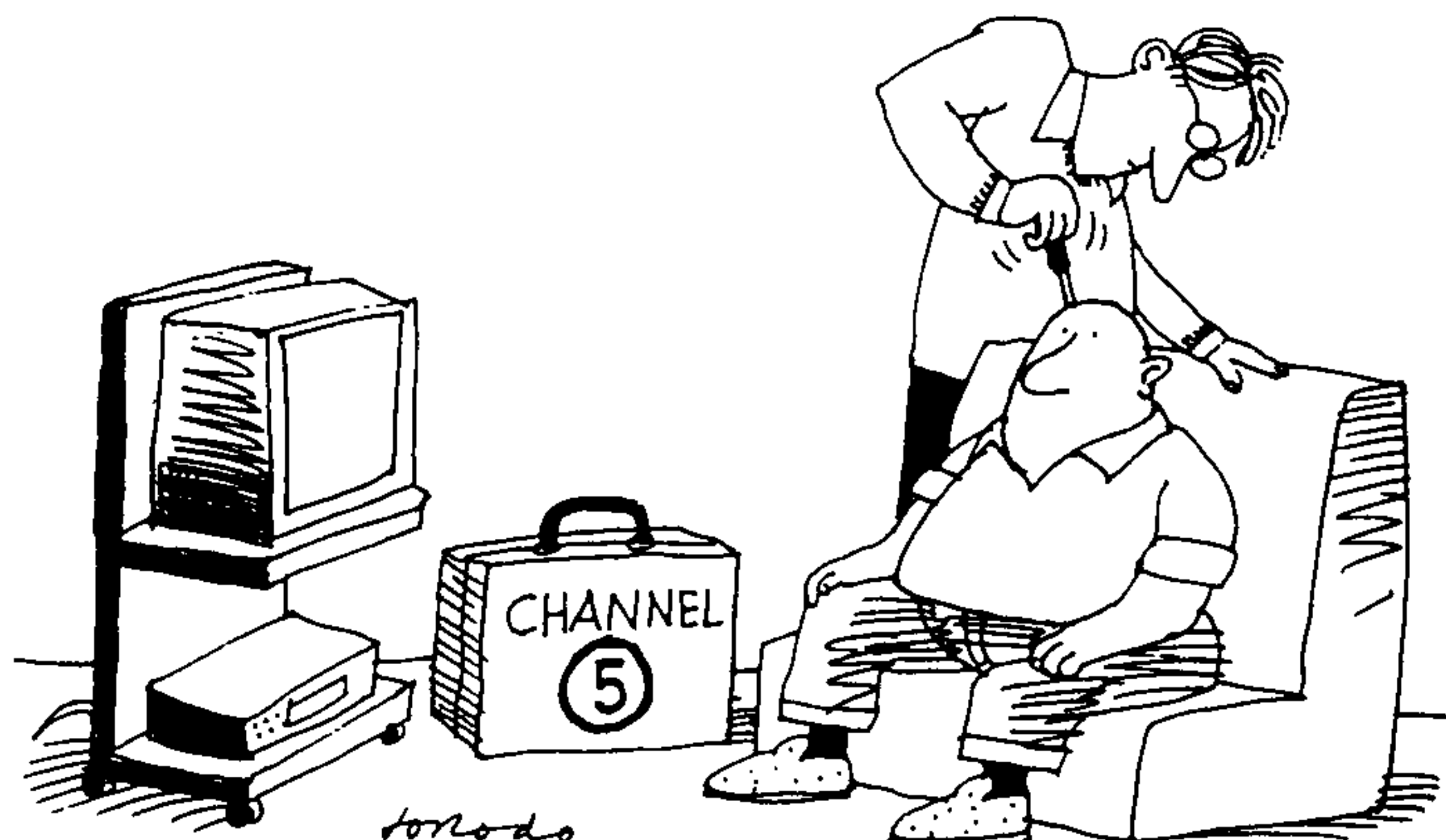
For two series we have waited for him to admit that the death of his wife in a car accident seven years ago might have got him down a bit. In last week's first episode he finally went to a bereavement councillor, and cried

week. And yet no one has said a word.

The series' real downfall, though, is its crippling lack of suspense. There are plots galore, usually concerning violent death and mayhem, but most are flattened by the show's air of lassitude and boredom. It's consistently one of the most limply directed and slackly edited shows on air. People are always getting out of cars very slowly, or taking ages to have inconsequential conversations. When something does eventually happen, you're so anaesthetised you barely notice.

So why is it so successful? To reach a third season without noticeably improving — indeed, some of the acting has markedly declined — is quite an achievement in today's cut-throat TV environment. But it may be that *Dangerfield* is the exception to the rule that, to succeed, the BBC's popular drama must become more like ITV's.

In its lack of action, its downbeat avoidance of anything approaching excitement, the show is far more reminiscent of BBC



tear-free actorish sobs. Most of the time, though, he just works like a madman, dividing his time between his work in general practice and his spare-time duties as a police surgeon. So hard does he work, in fact, that he hasn't yet noticed that his two children have had radical plastic surgery since the last series. *Dangerfield*'s new son is a good six inches taller than the previous incumbent and presents *Blue Peter* three times a

drama as it used to be. Those stolid, studio-bound series of the seventies — these are *Dangerfield*'s true precursors. It may be that in a world sated by excitement, a truly boring TV programme is just what everyone needs. If so, *Dangerfield* has got the formula absolutely right.

*'Old Couch
Potato'*

MEDIA NEWS

CHANNEL Four's *Cutting Edge* on 16 September exposed Tony Craig, the man who wanted to construct a "paradise island" for wholesome families but had somehow forgotten that he had a previous wife and daughter who had accused him in court of child abuse.

Eye readers may have found the story familiar. They could have read it on 1 December 1995 in "Desert Island Fibs", an article on page 26 of *Private Eye* 886. The reference may be necessary because — for some reason — the *Cutting Edge* programme forgot to mention the story or the *Eye*!

BBC TV and radio supremo Will Wyatt was none too pleased to see so many of the corporation's famous names exercising their right of free speech during the recent Edinburgh Festival.

At a programme review meeting shortly afterwards, he gave his colleagues a headmasterly chat about the need for unquestioning loyalty at all times, explaining that it was "the duty of senior staff to speak up and refute lies or misinformation — anyone there at the BBC's expense is there to proselytise... What should quite rightly be discussed in a closed room at White City might not be appropriate for a public debate which would be on the record."

Someone then pointed out that the most damaging comments often came from former staff, and that "nothing could be done" about them. "Except remember their names!" Wyatt replied.

GREAT excitement at BBC TV centre, where the latest wheeze to inspire more creative programme-making has seen thousands of glossy cut-out origami-style cubes appearing all over the building.

The instructions are simple: creative types simply write down their idea in the two-inch space provided, press all the tabs together and — hey presto! — you post your cube off.

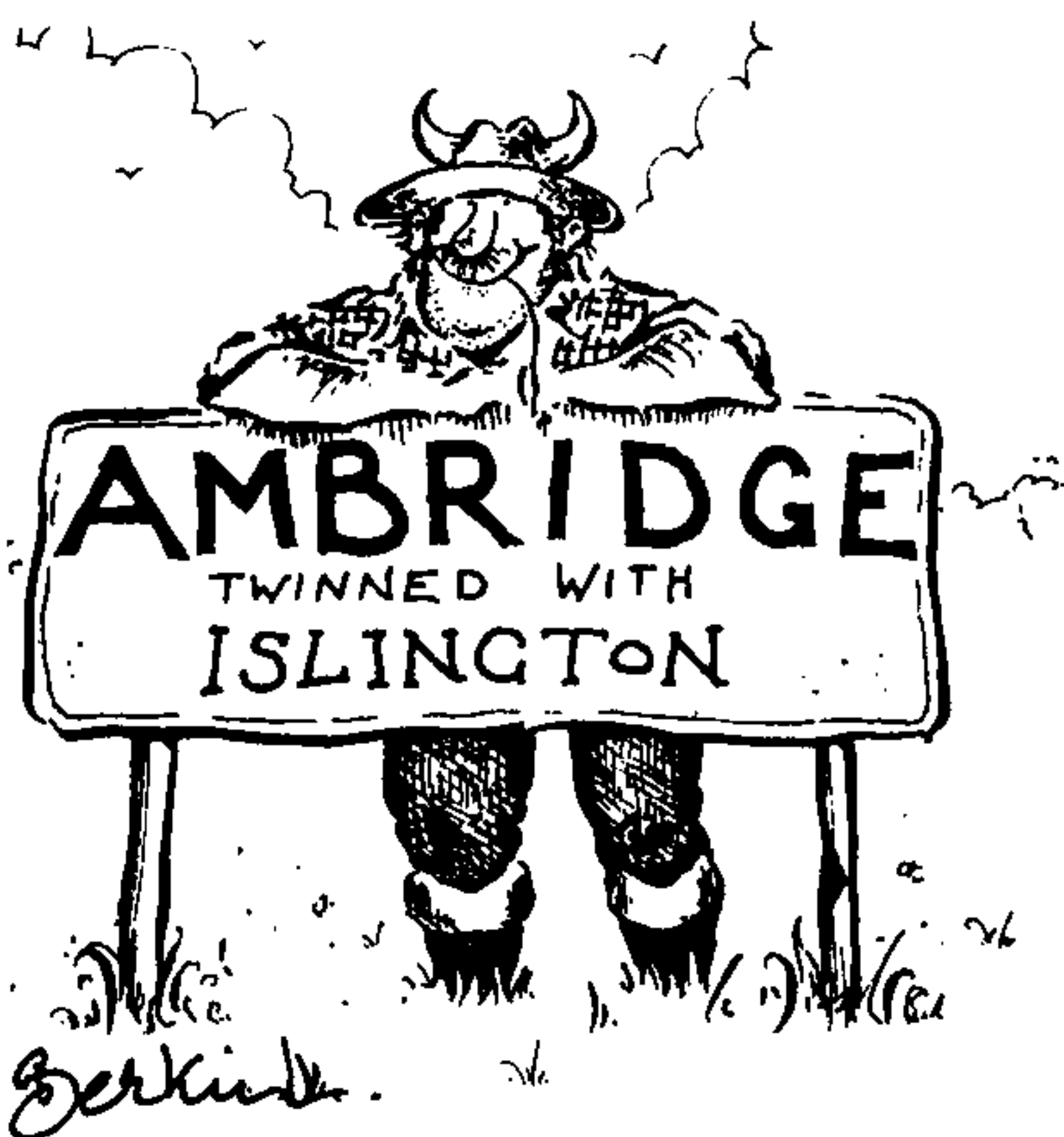
If you win "you could see your idea developed into a show, and win one of our fun packed prizes. For your choice of prize, please tick a box: a box at the Albert Hall; A pair of Reeboks; tickets to see the 'Boks playing rugby; holiday for two in Cuba" — gedit?!!

So instead of receiving credit for, and being allowed to work on, a programme that was your idea at the BBC, you now get a pair of trainers.

DAVID "Rommel" Montgomery has provided much amusement by claiming that Mirror Group's pathetic LIVE! cable TV channel — home of Topless Darts and Lunchbox Volleyball — is worth £50 million to £90 million.

Despite the £40 million spread; and the fact that Rommel won't name the independent expert who provided the valuation; and the fact that he is unable to provide audience figures for LIVE!, the post-Maxwell future of the *Mirror* is still apparently in television, with LIVE! complemented by a 20 percent stake in Scottish Television (STV), the *Taggart*-producing ITV station.





THE latest shake-up in BBC news and current affairs has certainly done wonders for the corporation's journalism. On 2 September, for instance, *Newsnight* presented a now-it-can-be-told story dating back to 1946 of how a Jewish group tried to take revenge on Germany for the Holocaust. The group first tried to poison the water supplies of German cities; when that failed, they then put arsenic in the bread supplied to German POWs. Several hundred Germans died in agony.

Fascinating stuff; but the programme's diligent researchers had apparently failed to notice that the whole story was told in considerable detail in a book published as long ago as 1971, *Forged in Fury*. The author, Michael Elkins, was the BBC's correspondent in Jerusalem!

THE confidential "Minutes of Keeping in Touch Meeting" of 29 July would make depressing reading for BBC licence-payers — if they were allowed to see them.

It looks as if licence-payers will be asked to fork out more cash in November — not least to pay for the growing army of outside consultants who are even now working out how best to tell us why that licence fee must go up in the first place.

According to the "Licence Fee Campaign Update", the government was interviewing consultants until mid-August. The consultants would then be in the BBC for six to eight weeks. "The decision on the licence fee was expected to coincide with the budget," this November. No doubt we can expect another appearance from BBC director-general Birt to explain his global vision for our "glorious future" before then.

Discussion of the World Service revealed how domestic the agenda is. Despite withering criticism from around the world of plans for the service, the In Touch meeting's summary of press opinion states, incredibly, that "one or two positive pieces in the press recently have been encouraging, and the media situation is improving slightly" — a judgement that can only be true for those who confine their reading to the BBC propaganda rag, *Ariel*.

There was also discussion of the rumoured sell-off of the Resources Directorate. "The Information Memorandum inviting tenders to bid for BBC Transmission would probably be issued later that week... The sale would be handled on the BBC's behalf by Lehman Brothers merchant bank, who would thereafter handle media relations."

BIRTSPEAK

"GENERAL MANAGER, TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCTION SERVICES, NEWS."

"Neil Dormand, currently Head of Production Operations NCA, is to be redesignated General Manager, Technology and Production Services, News. Manager Production (post vacant), Business Systems Manager (Tiffany Hall), Manager Safety Services (Peter Hunter) and Manager Divisional Services (Pippa Cosens) will report to Neil. He will also be the designated executive with responsibility for the application of Risk Management, Health and Safety, and Information Security Policies within News Division. Reporting to Richard Ayre, Deputy Chief Executive, News, Neil will be responsible for overall policy with regard to resource provision and will ensure that all new technology is in accordance with the requirements of our 5-year efficiency strategy."

— Announcement on the BBC's computer network.

HACKWATCH: THE PLANE TRUTH

TWO months on, we are still none the wiser about the cause of the explosion that downed TWA flight 800 off Long Island, killing 228 passengers.

While this may be upsetting for the victims' relations — "No one has called to tell us anything, we have heard nothing except from the press and it's often contradictory," says one — it could turn out to be very good news indeed for TWA and the American government, since lack of firm evidence will make any legal action against them far less likely to succeed.

TWA's insurers, US Aviation Underwriters, know this only too well: as the main insurers of Pan Am Flight 103, which crashed over Lockerbie eight years ago, they were accused of spreading "misinformation" and "false stories" to confuse jurors in the subsequent lawsuits. Only three weeks before the TWA disaster in July, they were convicted of fraud in connection with their handling of a SouthWest Airlines crash near Los Angeles in 1987.

With a little help from the FBI, they can thus be counted on to exploit confusing signals from the investigators, magnified by inconsistent press reports. And there are certainly plenty of inconsistencies to exploit...

19 July: "Terror or Accident?" asks the *Guardian's* headline, striving to keep an open mind. But the *Mail* already has a pet theory: "Missile strike fears over jumbo fireball." The *Independent*, too, seems pretty sure it was no accident: "The search for the perpetrators begins."

20 July: What a difference a day makes. "FBI experts steer clear of bomb theory," the *Indie* now reports.

21 July: Another day, another *volte face*. "FBI: 'Bomb caused jet crash'," the *Independent on Sunday* announces. FBI confidence has been strengthened by the recovery of the plane's flight recorder, according to the *Sunday Telegraph*: "Navy locates black boxes from TWA Flight 800."

22 July: Or not, as the case may be. "Teams were continuing the hunt for the aircraft's cockpit data and voice recorders on the Atlantic floor," the *Times* reports. "Acoustic equipment had been unable to pick up the pinging sound that they transmit after a crash." Meanwhile, the possibility of sabotage has receded. "Bodies give no hint of bomb," says the *Guardian*.

23 July: Time for yet another rethink. "TWA last tests 'find traces of explosive'," a *Telegraph* headline reveals.

24 July: This promising line is followed up by the *Times*, which says that traces of "rare explosive" on the underside of the jet's wing imply "a bomb could have been stowed in the baggage compartment".

25 July: After those elusive flight recorders are found and analysed, the *Herald Tribune* hedges its bets: "Did a Small Missile Hit TWA 800? Maybe, But Not Likely." According to the *Times*, however, the recordings clearly indicate that the plane was hit by two explosions — one at 13,000 feet, another at 9,000 feet.

27 July: The *Daily Express* reports that experts listening to the flight recorders "heard a split-second mystery sound, followed by dead silence — a 'carbon copy' of the bombed Lockerbie jet recording." One explosion, two explosions — what's the difference? At least we now know there was a bomb.

31 July: "Bomb theory still not proved," the *Guardian* insists. "Investigators conceded that the recorders provided 'no acoustic evidence regarding the source of the catastrophic event'." Meanwhile, those still loyal to the bomb theory begin to scrutinise the plane's cargo. All sorts of bizarre items were on board, but one package, containing human corneas for transplant, is briskly eliminated. "That package, which was in the cockpit, does not appear to be suspect," the *Times* reports.

6 August: "Jet bomb may have been in transplant container," declares a sensational headline in, er, the *Times*.

9 August: The *Herald Tribune* has another lead. "Safety investigators are exploring whether the nearly empty centre fuel tank on TWA 800 might have exploded in flight, although so far they have developed no such evidence."

10 August: Having stuck loyally to the bomb theory for several weeks the *Times* suddenly

changes its mind: "TWA jet evidence 'points to accident'." Burn marks on the plane's right wing raise "the possibility that one of the engines had exploded".

13 August: The idea of an accident is suddenly all the rage. "TWA inquiry rules out bomb in hold theory." (*Guardian*.) "TWA riddle deepens as doubts over bomb grow." (*Independent*.) Even so, as the *Herald Tribune* notes, "everything remains on the table... and although most investigators are sceptical, even a missile strike has not been ruled out."

15 August: After a mere two days, the accident theory is out of fashion again. "Fuel tank blame ruled out in TWA crash." (*Times*.) It's replaced by an old favourite: "Material in Engine Suggests Bomb Explosion." (*Herald Tribune*.)

22 August: But not for long. "Fuel tank blast may have led to TWA crash," the *Daily Telegraph* suggests. "Investigators disclosed that the loud noise last heard on Flight 800's cockpit voice recorder... has proved to be more consistent with a fuel-air mix explosion than a bomb."

24 August: Here we go again. Traces of explosive allegedly found in one of the cabin seats are described by the *Guardian* as "Strongest evidence yet of bomb on TWA flight". The *Herald Tribune* is slightly more cautious: "FBI Aide Confirms Discovery But Has No Evidence of Bomb."

26 August: The *Daily Mail* hails another breakthrough. "Investigators who discovered traces of plastic explosive have now reportedly found evidence of nitro-glycerine."

27 August: Case closed? Not quite. "The FBI believes the traces were from capsules carried by a heart patient," according to the *Daily Telegraph*. *Guardian* readers are given an alternative explanation: that the explosive traces may date from the Gulf War, when the Boeing 747 was used to ferry American troops.

28 August: In the absence of any other speculation, the missile theory — all but ruled out early on — is suddenly back in vogue. "A photograph taken at a party on Long Island has added to the mystery," the *Times* reports, "by capturing an image of an unidentified object flaming at one end like a missile."

2 September. James Kallstrom, head of the FBI team, reviews his progress so far. "The FBI is not rooting for a bomb," he tells *Time* magazine. "The best thing for the country, and probably the world, is a mechanical failure." In the early days of the inquiry, Kallstrom boasted that "I can get anything I want. I can sue anyone. I can do anything I want to. I don't have any limitations." After weeks of intensive investigation, it now transpires that he has one rather big limitation: in spite of heroic efforts by the FBI and TWA to "fill the information gap" with dubious leaks and briefings — all faithfully reported by the ravenous media — he and his colleagues are still utterly clueless.



DOING THE ROUNDS

THE accident and emergency department at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, is designed to cope with 60,000 patients a year. Last year's attendance topped 130,000, with the toll increasing by 4 percent a year.

Such a stress-free working environment may explain why 20 percent of the nursing staff have left in the last three months. Most nursing shifts now include two or three agency staff who have no specialist casualty experience and often cannot even find the toilet. Morale among the few remaining senior staff is not as high as it might be.

The management response to the crisis has been swift and decisive. Nursing duties have been rearranged to include a popular 77-hour week of night duty one week in every five. The expansion of job-sharing has been curtailed, making child-care arrangements difficult and an unofficial freeze on the employment of experienced (ie more expensive) nursing staff has been introduced.

Chief Executive David Edwards has been duly rewarded for this frugality. Last year his salary rose by 15 percent — just five times the increase of his nurses — the biggest increase of all the trust bosses.

● **KELLY THOMPSON** of Leeds was taken to Jimmy's, Europe's largest teaching hospital, in premature labour. She had had a previous miscarriage and had been in and out of the hospital with difficulties during the current pregnancy. When she arrived with contractions at 31 weeks, she was told that, due to staff shortages, the nearest neonatal intensive care bed was in Luton, 170 miles away. Eventually a cot was freed up in Manchester and she made a 50-mile dash across the Pennines. As a St James's and Seacroft university hospital NHS trust spokesman put it: "We're desperately trying to fill vacancies."

● **HEALTH** minister Gerard Malone obviously failed to visit Wales on his recent NHS "listening tour". It's easier to find a dentist in Sarajevo than Brecon, according to visiting Bosnian politicians. One suffered severe toothache but was turned away from two of the town's clinics, along with other

emergencies, because of the pressure to treat registered patients. Both lists were closed to new patients. An afternoon of phone calls later, and a cancellation appointment was found in Hay-on-Wye, more than 30 miles away.

Elsewhere in Wales, two thirds of GP trainee posts lie empty, 30 percent of GP trainees are from elsewhere in the EU and 25 percent have no intention of entering general practice after qualification. Local district general hospitals are also being forced to scour Europe to fill junior posts.

This crisis may have escaped Dr Carl Clowes, medical officer to Powys health care trust, unsuccessful Plaid Cymru candidate and graffiti artist in residence at the Welsh office (he was caught paint spraying the walls with Welsh language slogans). Dr Clowes has suggested that doctors in Wales should sit a Welsh language proficiency test before being allowed to practise. As Welsh patients are lucky to get a doctor whose first language is English, Carl's plan smacks slightly of political views clouding public duties. Unless he can get Welsh on the curriculum in Germany, Holland and Spain, that is...

HEALTH minister Gerald Malone says: "There is no information which suggests staff shortages exist."

★ A survey by the **National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts** found that 79 percent of hospitals experienced recruitment difficulties in the year to August 1995.

★ In the Midlands, 20 percent of consultant psychiatrist posts remain unfilled and there is a national shortage of juniors in most specialities, especially accident and emergency.

★ Recruitment and retention of staff is even worse in general practice, where the number of GP trainees has fallen by 15 percent between 1989 and 1995, while the number of GPs between the ages of 60 and 65 has fallen by 30 percent.

★ Meanwhile the **Royal College of Nursing** reports a 75 percent decline in the number of nurses training over the last 15 years.



"I bet when Hippocrates started this, he had no idea it would turn into a £79-billion business."

● A YEAR after its planners were caught unawares by the inevitable closure of the defence funded **Cambridge Military hospital** in Aldershot (*Eyes passim*), North and Mid Hampshire health authority is desperately trying to make up for the consequent £8 million loss of resources. Staff at provider trusts have been forced to attend 20 "sharing the problem" working parties, thus far without an evident solution. NMHA chief executive Dr Kate Barnard has however found a way of minimising the embarrassment any debt might cause in the run up to the election: £3 million worth of resources are to be shifted from the fast growing areas of Andover and Basingstoke and towards sedate Winchester — constituency of a certain Gerald Malone, health minister.

● **AT Heartlands hospital** in East Birmingham, the staff canteen has closed down to be replaced by a new one that takes 15 minutes to reach. Staff on a half hour break thus have just enough time to turn round and come back again.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM



WHILE there is considerable relief down on the farm that John Major is set to abandon the proposed cull of 150,000 cattle, the prime minister actually had no choice.

It should not be forgotten that, with the catastrophic slump in beef consumption and the banning of the sale of cattle over 30 months old, there was a massive backlog of unsold animals in the system. Since April, under its infamous "cattle destruction scheme", the ministry of agriculture (aka Maffia) has already destroyed more than 420,000 cattle — but this has not dented the problem.

The Maffia originally planned to destroy 25,000 to 30,000 cattle a week, clearing beef cattle out of the system by the end of October. That would have left a steady flow of old cows to be dealt with, at an average rate of 15,000 a week. But, right from the start, the

timetable ran adrift and, last week, fewer than 15,000 were slaughtered. Now the backlog is increasing at a rate of more than 1,000 a week.

As beef prices have failed to recover, farmers are finding that their young cattle are fetching less at market than the price paid by the Maffia for cows destined for destruction. Predictably, and necessarily, they are marking down their mature breeding cattle for destruction and putting their young heifers "to bull" to produce next season's calves.

This means that the number of cattle entering the destruction scheme will rise sharply over the next few weeks and months, reducing still further any chance the Maffia might have of eliminating the backlog, still estimated at more than 120,000 cattle. In the south west, where the problem is most acute, it will take more than 40 weeks to eliminate unless drastic action is taken. And, as summer turns to autumn, with winter not far behind, feed costs and revenue losses are forcing many farmers to consider turning their cattle out into the streets, leaving them to fend for themselves.

With disaster looming, the like of which has not been experienced by even "old hands" in the industry, Major could hardly have added another 150,000 cattle

to the list for destruction, much less the quarter of a million our "partners" in the EU are said to be demanding. But, as many predicted at the start, this leaves the chances of an early removal of the EU export ban at exactly where they have always been — precisely nil.

WHILE farmers bleed to death, no such fate awaits slaughterhouse owners who are still benefiting hugely from the fees paid by the Maffia for destroying healthy cattle (*Eyes passim*).

But such has been the outrage at the "big four" who have siphoned off 80 per cent of the kill at the rip-off price of £87 per animal, plus the value of the hide — more than four times the going commercial rate — that there have been moves to cut the rate to a more realistic level. This has been assessed as £21 per head by accountants Coopers & Lybrand.

Cabinet minister Roger Freeman, who is nominally in charge of the destruction scheme, expressed outrage at the rip-off and a determination to claw back the excess profits when the initial arrangements expired in June. But faced with the combined might of the four who are determined to protect their lucrative contracts — Cheale Meats, the Sims Group, Midland Meat Packers and Associated Beef Processors — the governments quietly climbed down.

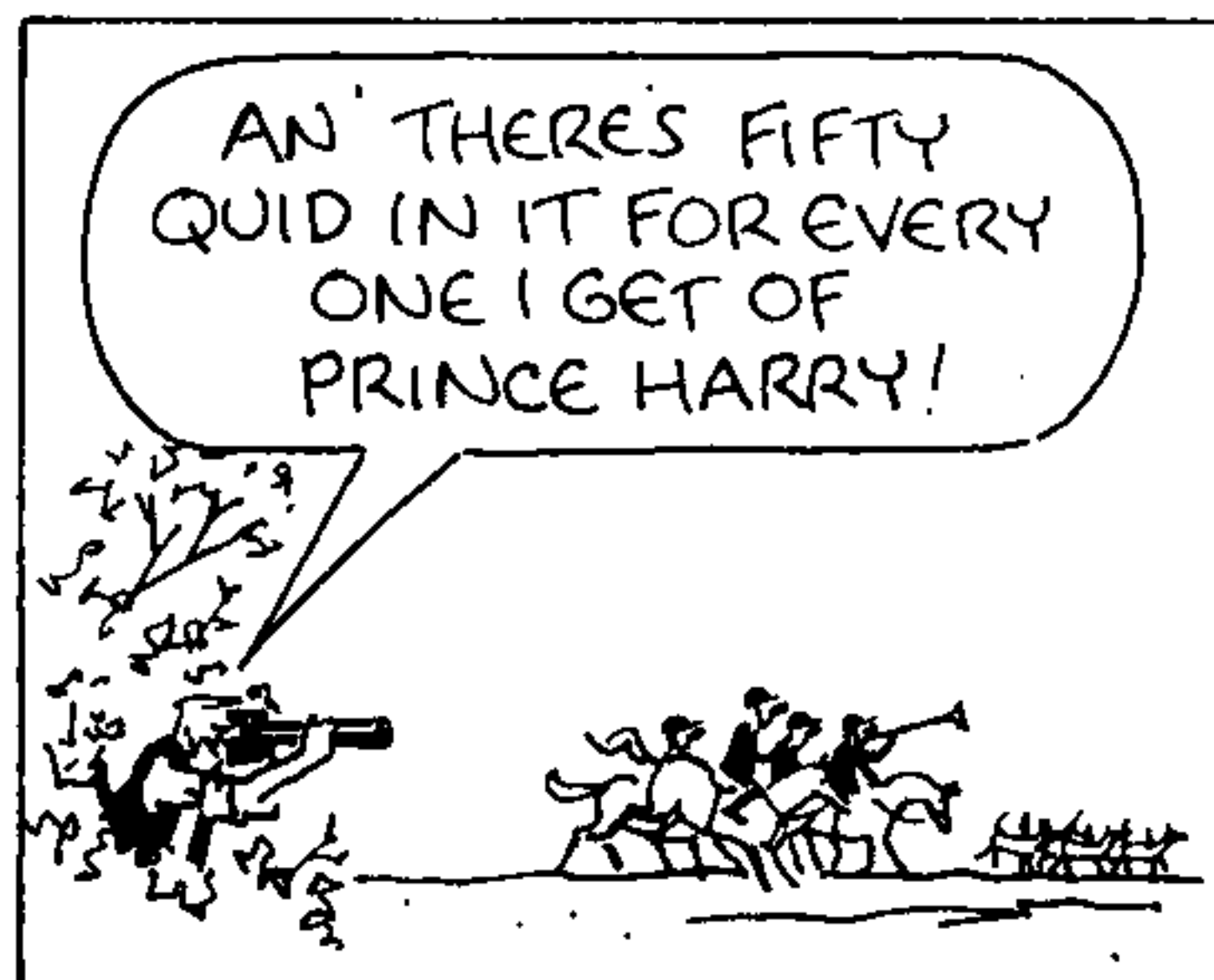
The Maffia awarded a fee of £41 plus the value of the hides (up to £26 each), leaving HMG paying a mere three times the going rate. And while the original rate was only good to mid-June, the munificent Maffia has continued to pay the £87 a head right up to this month, leaving the "big four" and a few others with windfall profits of £22 million — which the government was entirely within its rights to reclaim.

With the delays in the destruction programme causing so much grief for John Major, the last thing the Maffia could tolerate was any delay. When it became evident that the big players could pull out if they were not rewarded so generously, leaving the programme in tatters, the Maffia had to play along. Not for the first time, it seems, the tail is wagging the dog.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

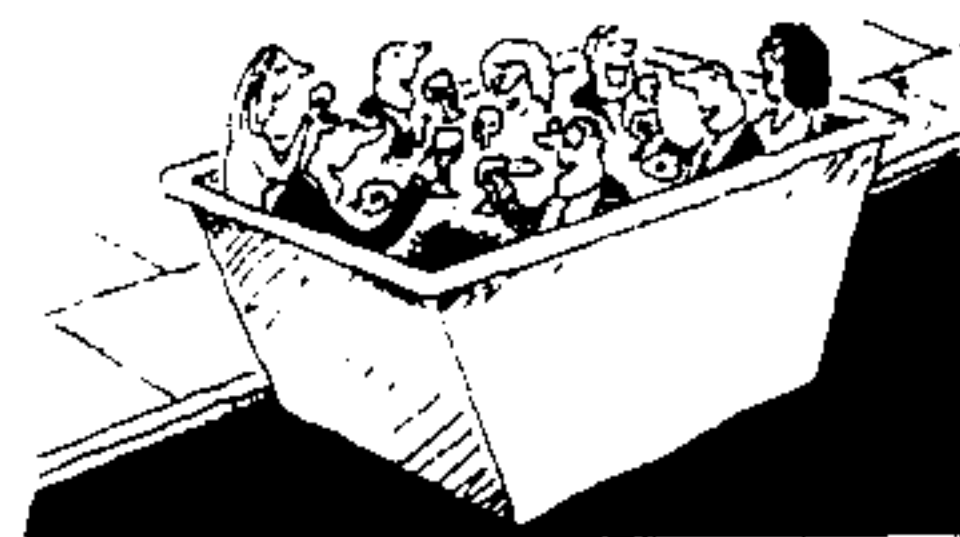
ALBERT





THE Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday, 20 September 1996



NEW LABOUR, NEW SHAMBLES

AS we predicted, the Mark Trotter scandal has brought down the ruling Labour group in Hackney, where chaos reigns.

The Labour party has expelled a large rump of Hackney councillors for meeting as a caucus; but most of them — around 20 — were so disgusted by the cover-up surrounding Trotter, the paedophile care worker who died of Aids last year, they had already set themselves up as a new group anyway, New Labour in Hackney. They are going to line up with the Liberals and try to take over the borough and make it fit for human habitation.

All this has come as a shock to ex-council leader John McCafferty and London regional Labour party secretary Terry Ashton. McCafferty had just been reelected as Hackney Labour group leader and was set to sack chief executive Tony Elliston and beleaguered housing boss Bernard Crofton (*Eyes passim ad infinitum*) again. Instead, half

his group have quit/been expelled, and he is now described as The Man Who Lost Hackney for Labour.

Terry Ashton, meanwhile, is mortified about the scandal being spread over the media and spoiling "new" Labour's image. He wanted McCafferty back as leader primarily to close down the inquiries into Trotter. Instead, the whole thing became public and even McCafferty's supporters were obliged to support the call for the mother of all inquiries.

The inquiry may want to examine claims that Trotter was so close to the Hackney Labour group he had the job of filling in 60 blank postal votes in the 1992 general election.

Meanwhile the remaining Labourites who reluctantly agreed to an independent inquiry were churlish in their defeat. Whip Julie Grimble was wheeled out to blame the already suspended Hettie Peters for previous inactivity about Trotter.

But the changes in the chamber may at last lead to the findings of four

previous inquiries into Trotter, two of which were held within months of his starting work for the council in 1981, becoming public. Nationally, of course, Labour will want the inquiry completed after the general election.

Educaton Deptatment

PRIMARY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

GENERAL ATTENDANT

£10,425 pa inc (pro rata)
27.5 Hours per week, Term Time only

Camden Council

COCK UP OF THE WEEK

CASTLEREAGH borough council has apologised to Ulsterbus after mayor Iris Robinson, wife of Ulster Unionist Peter Robinson, Ian Paisley's deputy, complained to the bus company about what she said was inappropriate use of the Irish language on the sides of buses. She was very embarrassed when it was pointed out that the signs were actually in French and designed to help tourists.

Interchange's lottery bid. Coun Terry Comerford even sits on the Interchange board, but without getting paid for it; and no councillor has personally benefited from the loan, the lottery money or the charity's £200,000 annual grant. Camden taxpayers, however, have certainly lost out and may wonder why Hampstead town hall wasn't put on the open market where it could fetch up to £2 million.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

WHEN Haringey council stopped local resident Carol O'Regan seeing leases held between Haringey and local garages that were causing pollution and obstruction in the road, Mr O'Regan invoked the local government finance act of 1982 and went to court. The council tried to have the case thrown out on technicalities but was found guilty of obstructing access to information and was fined £650 and ordered to pay £2,000 costs. This was embarrassing for Toby Harris, the leader of Haringey — and a member of the council of the Campaign for Freedom of Information!

IN BRIEF

EDINBURGH: Crusading Labour transport chairman David Begg, who has banned cars from half of Princes Street and wants then banished from central Edinburgh altogether, was pictured recently throwing away his car keys next to the headline: "I've dumped my car for the bus... why can't you?" He now walks everywhere... except when he's driving his partner's car, that is, or using her reserved parking space outside their Castle Street flat in the car-choked centre.

BENT: Following release of the ombudsman's report into bribery in the planning department, deposed Tory leaders will have to explain why they rushed through planning permission for businessman Jim Carlon, who wanted to turn a pub into a restaurant and had just donated £4,500 to the Tory election fund. Labour members are delighted with the report — but they don't mention that Carlon was a paid-up Labour member who, when sorting out his application in 1993, was taking part in elections to the party's NEC. If only he were still alive to explain...

KNOWSLEY: An industrial tribunal said the "socialist" council acted illegally in cutting home help staff wages by forcing them to accept new contracts and a £45 a week pay cut or risk losing their jobs. The council must now pay £500,000 compensation. Other employees disputing contractual changes were arrested after the council told police they had falsely claimed overtime. Knacker found "no dishonesty or intent to deceive". (Knowsley has since won a government-sponsored award as "Investors in People".)

GLASGOW: Despite big cutbacks "new" Labour pushed the boat out for the visit of France's President Chirac. On the menu for Chirac, Provost Pat Lally and assorted councillors were Venison & Hazelnut Terrine with a cranberry and orange dressing, and Balmoral Salmon dressed with a champagne and dill sauce. Lally delivered a great arselicking speech — which didn't once mention Pacific atolls or that Glasgow was a "nuclear free zone".

NATIONAL PLOTTERY

FOLLOWING the Migrant Training Company saga (see *Eyes passim*), there has been more charity chicanery in Camden, north London.

Council leaders have deliberately suppressed a report into the troubled finances of local charity Interchange, which helps other charities obtain services, to avoid spoiling Interchange's chances of winning millions in funding from the national lottery.

The district auditor and Inspector Knacker of the fraud squad will now look into the council's relationship with the charity, which dates back to 1987 when Camden underwrote a £300,000 loan to it from the Co-op bank.

The council, which also provides Interchange with premises and a £200,000 annual grant, attached a rider that Interchange must maintain its Dalby Street site in Kentish Town and then hand the building back to Camden. Interchange failed to do so and thus broke the terms of the loan, leading the district auditor to conclude that "it is likely that the council's guarantee to the trust was unlawful".

So what did the council do? Er, nothing... until this July when Camden, fearing trouble ahead, asked Interchange if it wouldn't mind handing back the building. Again nothing happened.

The story then took another twist. Interchange came up with a plan to buy Hampstead town hall — if it could get lottery funds — and for that to happen Camden would have to put down a deposit of £700,000 and support the bid. Camden should of course have washed its hands of the deal, especially in light of the district auditor's findings. Instead, it gave its support.

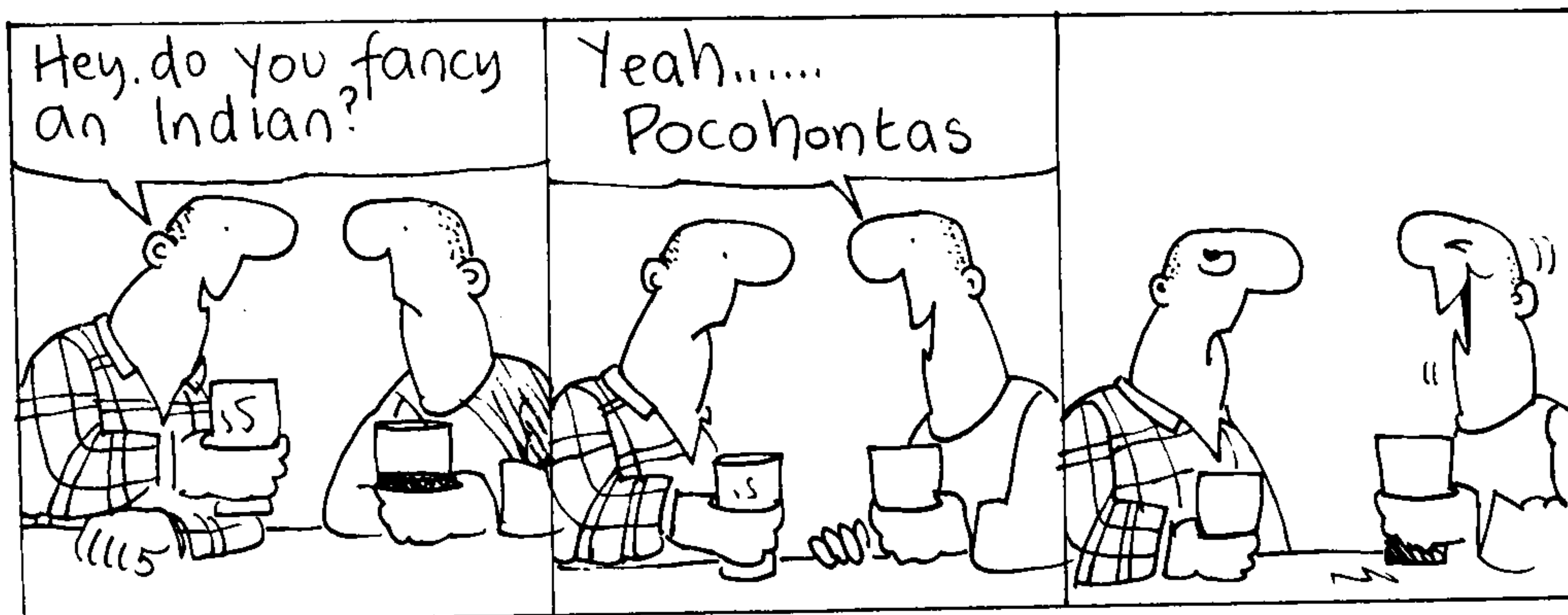
As a leaked memo put it, if Camden had refused Interchange on account of its still unresolved loan arrangements, it would have "killed off" the lottery bid. The bid went through — with Camden's backing — and Interchange landed a £6 million windfall!

So have Camden officials been corrupt or incompetent? For now, it seems the latter. A number of councillors, including finance chief John Mills, knew of the district auditor's damning findings yet still supported

NEWs that Peter "Mandy" Mandelson's 1992 election agent in Hartlepool, Coun Bernard Carr, has had to pay back the £150 he falsely claimed from the council for a trip to London which was actually paid for by the *Daily Telegraph's* "worst chef of the year" competition, came as no surprise to Carr's former colleagues in the homeless movement.

In the late 1970s Carr organised the Tyneside Housing Aid Centre, which was partly subsidised by Shelter. He had to leave after embarrassing discrepancies emerged in the centre's budget, caused in the main by Carr's practice of paying for this year's realities out of next year's dreams.

On the age-old principle that nothing succeeds like failure, Carr then got a job with the International Year for the Shelter of the Homeless. Once again he left before his time was up when one of his expenses bill seemed remarkably similar to one which had already been paid.



HUSBAND



"It's my gold card"

SIGNAL FAILURES

THE most wallet-warming story from the rail privatisation programme to date is that of Prism Rail, now running the LTS Rail franchise.

Prism Rail has existed as a company only since mid-1995 when it was put together by managers from the bus industry — the one mode of transport that has managed to lose passengers, despite the growing demand for travel.

In May this year Prism Rail's directors invested £4 million of their own money in Prism Rail shares when they first appeared on the stock market. The share price more than doubled on the first day, taking the value of the directors' stock to more than £10 million. In August the franchising director announced that Prism Rail was the likely winner of competitions for two franchises, South Wales and West Railway and Cardiff Railway Company. The share price is now roughly three times the original. Although Prism Rail has hardly any assets and has so far done nothing more than continue the LTS line as it was before, the directors' fortunes have gone through the roof.

Once it gains its next two franchises, Prism Rail will have won more franchises than any other bidder, having outbid a number of established transport companies and management buy-out teams. Everything has proceeded so fluently that rail privatisation could almost have been tailor-made for Prism Rail.

FACT: Kenneth Irvine, Prism's 34-year-old managing director, wrote papers on rail privatisation which were published by the right-wing Adam Smith Institute in 1987, and "in 1991 he was invited by the then secretary of state to present his proposals on rail privatisation to the ministerial team formulating policy for the Conservative party manifesto" (to use Prism's own words).

RAILTRACK is still having problems cleaning human excrement, lavatory paper and other rubbish from the tracks at stations — a problem highlighted at Brighton station (see *Eye* 887), which stank to high heaven while Railtrack arranged a contractor to clean the spaces between the platforms.

Under privatisation station staff are allowed to clean the platforms only. In the winter, despairing Friends of the Earth volunteers cleaned the station at Tooting, south London. Cleaning the station was the responsibility of Thameslink train operating company, which described Friends of the Earth's action as an illustration of the company's policy of working with the community. ("If Friends of the Earth want to do something like this again, then we would be quite happy to let them," Thameslink generously offered.) The volunteers were not allowed to clean the filthiest area of all, however — the track — which Railtrack should have been keeping clear of rubbish.

This summer London King's Cross station was humming. Like Brighton, King's Cross has a glass roof to keep the rain and wind out and the stench in. Railtrack wrote to a complainant in June: "Cleaning has taken place since 12th May and you are quite correct that the standard is clearly not good enough. A further meeting has taken place with the contractor and standards are measured against key performance indicators."

The tracks were subsequently cleaned, but recently passengers have noticed dollops of "key performance indicators" returning to the tracks with a vengeance.

'Dr B. Ching'

Letters

Copy writer

Sir,

Interesting to note that the *SUN*'s "political correspondent" (surely an oxymoron without the oxy-) claimed a world exclusive for the first thing I read in yesterday's *EYE*, reported in almost the same way. I hope you sue for copyright.

IAN MCROBERT,

Peterborough.

Gun point

Sir,

So Backbiter in your 6 September issue has found 32 MPs who shoot for recreation: shock horror.

There are $\frac{3}{4}$ million of us who shoot shotgun, rifle and pistol in the UK and we own over 2½ million weapons. This is rather less than the estimated illegal total of three million: please distinguish.

In the aftermath of Dunblane where one gun owner, for reasons that do not seem apparent unless he wanted to drag down the reputations of people who rightly despised him, went berserk, you have chosen to jump on the anti-death [sic] bandwagon. This is a pity because your consistent exposés of the BSE/CJD fiasco have been admirable.

Thomas Hamilton should never have retained his firearms certificate because of his poor firearms record. He would not have retained it here. Read the Dunblane evidence again and pursue that line of investigation.

Calling for a ban on guns because of one maniac is about as just as confiscating all word processors because some journalists tell lies.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN JONES,

Bristol.

Blake's seven and eight

Sir,

Re: THE NEMESIS FILE. In response to John Blake and his letter in Friday 6 September edition, I am certain that he will be delighted to learn that I have had my purchase monies refunded by the selling bookshop chain.

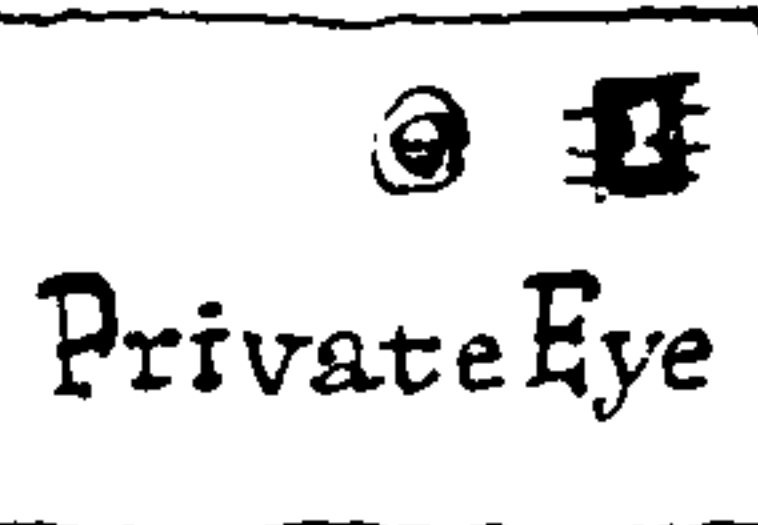
This reader rests his case and urges the Nation to do the same.

Yours faithfully,
PETER BOARDMAN,

Sheffield.



"Terrible day — Man Friday is now demanding £4.26 an hour"



ON THE LIFE BOATS

THE *Eye* must claim a crisp tenner from D.A. Godfrey of Littlehampton, who wrote in last issue's letters page: "I will send you a fiver if any crew refuses to accept delivery of a Severn when it is offered."

The Severn in question is a new class of lifeboat currently being distributed to crews by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. After a further £1 million worth of improvements, the jinxed new boat has been received with trepidation by lifeboatmen.

The boat was meant to arrive in Stornoway in the Western Isles of Scotland last year and be launched by the Duke of Kent. But each time it set off for Stornoway from RNLI headquarters in Poole it was crippled by a range of peculiar defects, from "stern gland problems" to "bubbles on the hull".

In January, while it was off Plymouth with the Stornoway crew on board, it "fell off a seven-foot wave", according to the RNLI. Although Brixham coastguards said it was an exceptional force eight wind, the crew seats on the boat, called The Will, buckled and the side keel fell off. Crewman Murdo O'Connor was hospitalised.

Since then crews at Stornoway and St Peter's Port, Guernsey, have told the RNLI they do not want The Will.

Man about town

Sir,

I'm sorry to read that the Rotten Borough Advertiser (906) ranks Manchester as "the world's ugliest city". No doubt the view from your London office is entirely free from the pollution, traffic and concrete buildings that plague the north. Still, never mind — the cities up here may not be beautiful, but at least they're not populated by patronising, stuck-up fucking southerners. Or should that be "fooking southerners" — no doubt with my amusing northern accent I "mis-pronounce" even the simplest vowel sounds?

Yours etc,
CHRIS GIBSON.

Manchester,

Lookalike



Drabble



Spock

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the remarkable resemblance between novelist Margaret Drabble and Mr Spock, of *Star Trek* fame?

Could they by any chance be related?

Yours sincerely,
S.J. GARDNER,

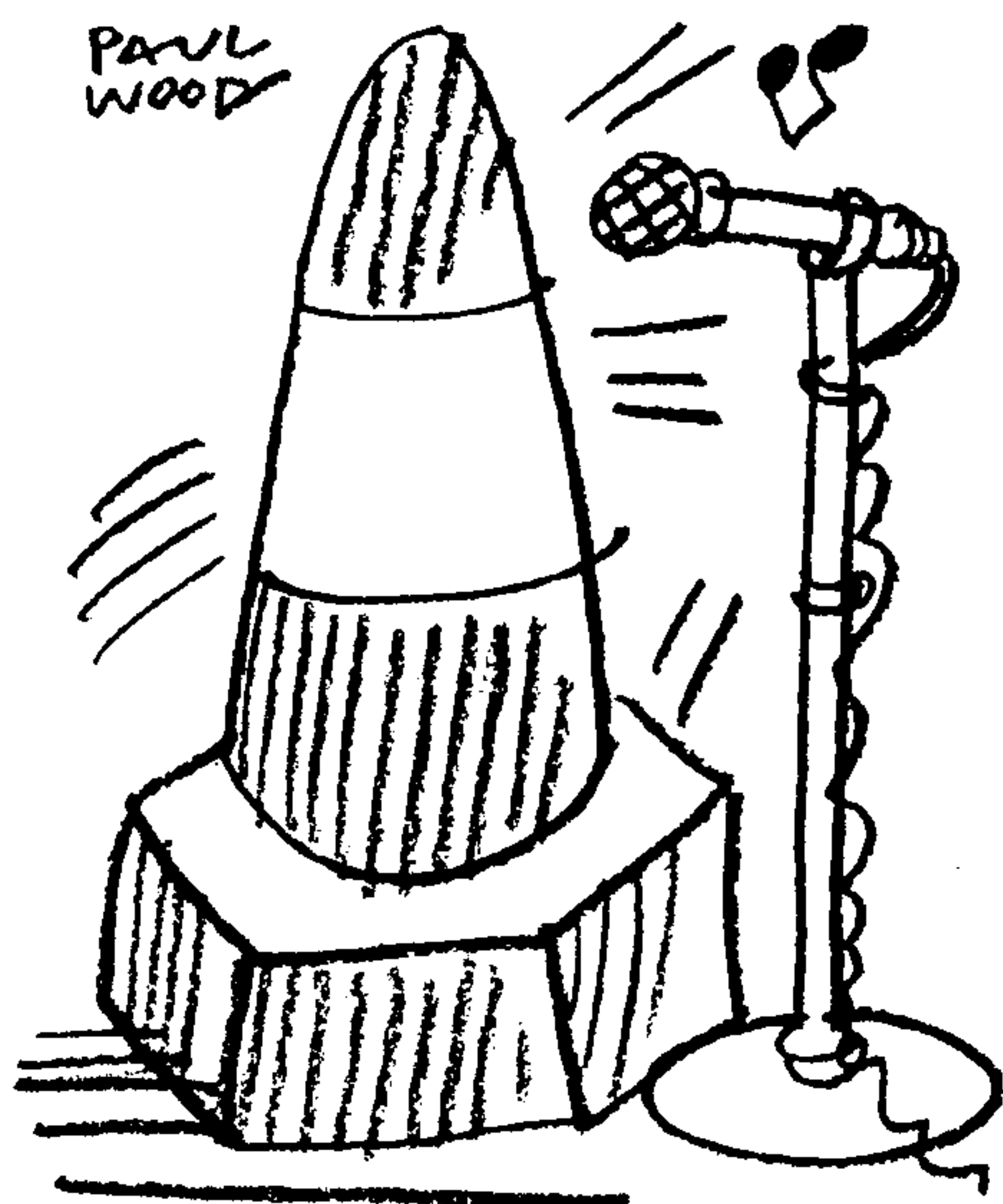
Lewes, E. Sussex.

Top of Julia's pops

JULIA Carling will present Friday's edition of *Top of the Pops*. The estranged wife of rugby star Will is a regular presenter of *The Big Breakfast* and *VH1 for You* on satellite.



Manchester Evening News



"There may be trouble ahead..."

Ill humour

Sir,

Re: Gnomesick Videos. Changes since Community Care introduced:

- Trolley waiting commonplace
- Trust managers wealthier
- Murders and rapes by general public higher
- Murders and rapes by mentally ill people discharged from hospital unchanged.

Satire uses humour to highlight abuse by the powerful; bigots use humour to incite fear, hatred and ignorance about the disempowered; PRIVATE EYE should know the difference.

Yours,
DAVID CREPAZ-KEAY,

Mental Health Consultant,
Chartridge, Bucks.

Tangled webs

Sir,

Re: Dirty Anoraks (906). I am sorry to see the EYE endorsing the hoary old cyber-chestnut that internet service providers (ISPs) can no more be held responsible for what they provide than can BT be for what "is said by its millions of subscribers during ordinary telephone conversations".

It is true that it is impossible for any service provider to be fully aware of the contents of every e-mail message or web site on the net. However, the various alt.sex. newsgroups and adult web sites are not exactly promoted in the electronic equivalent of plain brown envelopes. On the contrary they are accessible to anyone with the relevant, and widely available "news reader" and "browser" software. Given that research shows a high percentage of internet "hits" are to smutty sites and newsgroups, service providers can no more claim to be ignorant of what they might be providing than the corner newsagent is of the contents of top shelf magazines.

Earlier this year Compuserve did successfully restrict access to newsgroups following action in the German courts. This does not, in my opinion, amount to total censorship since this material was still available via other providers, but it showed that service providers can exert some control over the contents of the net. Naturally in the current marketplace individual service providers are unwilling to act unilaterally in this matter since to do so would be to hand commercial advantage to their rivals.

It all depends on who you think should get the profits from porn: the sex barons, the phone companies or the service providers. No prizes for guessing why these particular waters are being so successfully muddled by claims of innocence from all sides!

Yours (a reader since 1963),
JONATHAN INGLIS,

via e-mail.

Long distance learning

Sir,

While agreeing with the Dr B. Ching column of EYE 906, I think some poetic licence has been taken with distances. From Crewe to Glasgow and Inverness is probably 250 and 400 miles respectively. From Teesside, however, those distances are more like 190 and 300 miles. Do you know where Teesside is? ie Middlesbrough, Stockton etc.

Yours sincerely,
J. EGGLESTONE,

Wallsend, Tyne & Wear.

No harm done

Sir,

Re: "He is a harmless vagrant who already has a criminal record for rape...", John Suchet, ITN, Colemanballs, EYE 906.

I don't begrudge Mr Jackson his ten pounds, but I wonder if he wasn't already writing to the EYE when Suchet corrected his slip, later in the bulletin?

Suchet said: "I should — of course — have said 'a homeless vagrant'."

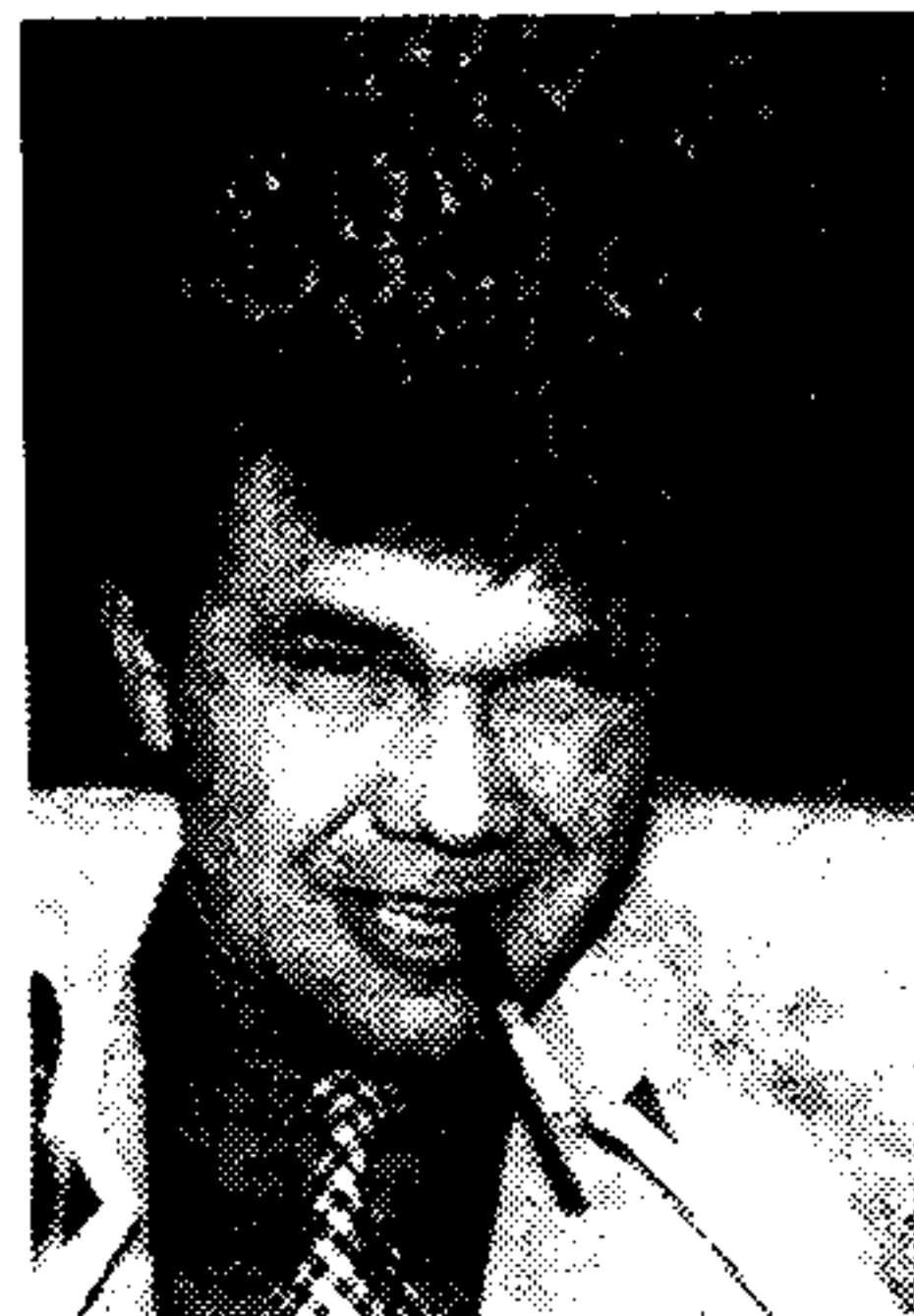
Yours,
ROGER SANROM,

Ilford, Essex.

Lookalike



Lebed



Charles

Sir,

Perusing my Sunday papers, I wonder if I am the only person to notice a distinctly worrying resemblance between General Alexander Lebed and Craig Charles in panto gear.

I think we — and the Russian people — should be told.

Yours,
CHARLIE HARRIS,

London NW3.

Pleased as Punch?

Sir,

I have just seen somebody buy a copy of PUNCH. Is this a record?

More power to your organ.
SEAN OTTEWELL,

via e-mail.

I-SPY

Amsterdam



Submitted by Loig Allix Thivend. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

Ladies in waiting

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the remarkable similarities between the recent use of "Leaders' Wives" to market the wares of our main political parties, and the hugely popular "Readers' Wives" section, successfully used to increase the readership of a certain publication usually found a couple of shelves above yours in the newsagents. If this new instance of party political "sleaze" can be allowed to continue, how long will it be before John from Brixton and Tony from Islington will be posing to provide "One for the ladies"?

Yours etc,
MARK YOUNG,

Edinburgh.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"It's a tale of two systems, John, and both exactly the same."

Mark Laurenson, Radio 5 Live
(Jean Wilcox)

"The trouble is, all year I haven't had the ability to go faster than possible."

Chris Boardman, BBC 2
(Charles J. Hughes)

"Oh, and here comes Caddick to bowl again from the pavilion end again... well, I don't suppose he'll mind if I read the scores between his balls."

Henry Blofeld, BBC Radio
(Geoff Brown)

Professor Anthony Clare: You were an only child. Do you know why?

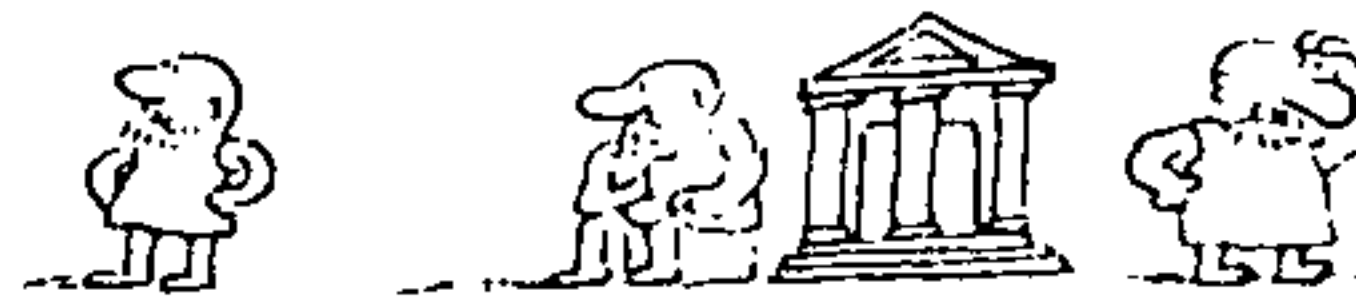
Uri Geller: My parents didn't have any other children.

Radio 4
(Roy Brewer)

"The Loyalists say they won't just lie down and walk away."

Dennis Murray, BBC1
(Michael Grosvenor)

HOM SAP



AUSTIN

YOU SAID YOU'D MAKE ME A HOUSEHOLD NAME..

SO I HAVE, SO I HAVE

STEP FORWARD MARCUS JULIUS SAUCE PAN.



FUNNY OLD WORLD

What To Do When You See A Bear

● **If the Bear Approaches:** Talk softly so it knows who you are. If it is snapping its jaws, growling or making "woofing" signs, it is displaying aggression. If it is a grizzly, consider climbing a tree.

If the Bear Attacks: Your response depends on the species. Bears sometimes (but not always) bluff their way out of a confrontation by charging, then turning away at the last moment. While fighting back usually increases the intensity of an attack, it may cause the bear to leave.

Grizzly Attacks: Play dead. Assume the "cannonball" position, with hands clasped behind neck and face buried in knees. Do not move until the bear leaves the area. Such attacks seldom last beyond a few minutes.



Black Bear Attacks: Playing dead is not appropriate. Try to retreat.

Grizzly or Black Bear Attacks When You Are Sleeping: Do not play dead. Climb a tree, unless it is a black bear. If you have no other option, try to intimidate the bear. (Canadian Tourist Board Leaflet. Spotter — P. Hill.)

— ● —

● "Mr Al-Assad was a big man with an abnormally distended lower colon and a huge capacity for creating this deadly gas," the coroner told reporters during an inquest at a Cairo District Hospital. "In

my professional opinion, I am certain that a terrible diet and a room with no ventilation were the twin causes of this tragedy."

The coroner was giving his verdict into the death of Mohammed Al-Assad, who had been found dead in his bed several days earlier. "There were no marks whatsoever on his body, but the autopsy revealed large amounts of methane gas in his system. Relatives have confirmed to me that his diet consisted principally of beans and cabbage, exactly the right combination of foods to produce large quantities of methane. A neighbour heard what he described as "the continuous sound of material being torn, followed by stifled screaming," and it appears that Mr Al-Assad repeatedly passed wind, and then passed out from breathing in the poisonous cloud of his own gas that was hanging over his bed. Had he left a window open, the concentration would not have been fatal, but he was shut up in a small and near-airtight bedroom. When rescue workers were called out and broke down the door to his room, all three of them got sick and one had to be hospitalized. I find that death was due to natural causes." (Associated Press, 31/8/95. Spotter — Dkrassner@aol.com)

— ● —

● "What is the modern world coming to when a gang of thieves arrive at the place they are going to rob in a taxi?" Justice Morris asked the defendants in a robbery case at the Auckland High Court. "I despair of the future for our country when a group of louts like you lack the intelligence to take even basic precautions to avoid detection."

Before sentencing Sineli Senivuga and Veileba Jobesa (two illegal Fijian immigrants) for their part in the robbery of 5 protective helmets and 400 puncture repair outfits from a Mt Eden bicycle shop, Justice Morris continued: "It has been put to me that the reason you were so easily apprehended after the robbery was that you had no getaway car. According to your defence counsel, that is because you forgot to ask the taxi to wait for you while you committed the crime. But even more stupidly, you had telephoned the taxi service in the first place and asked to be picked up at your home, so even if you had got away it would have been a simple matter to locate and arrest you later."

"Why couldn't you steal a car beforehand, like everybody else? You tell me it's because you don't have licences, but I preside daily over cases involving professional criminals who don't care about such trivial matters. You are imbeciles. I hereby sentence you both to five years in jail." (Southland Times (New Zealand), 4/8/96. Spotter — Chris Wilmot.)

compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

The Lottery Winners

TURNER

LOOK AT THE POOR DEVILS,
SHIVERING IN THE POURING RAIN,
WAITING FOR THE BUS TO TAKE THEM
INTO DULL, MIND NUMBING OFFICE JOBS.



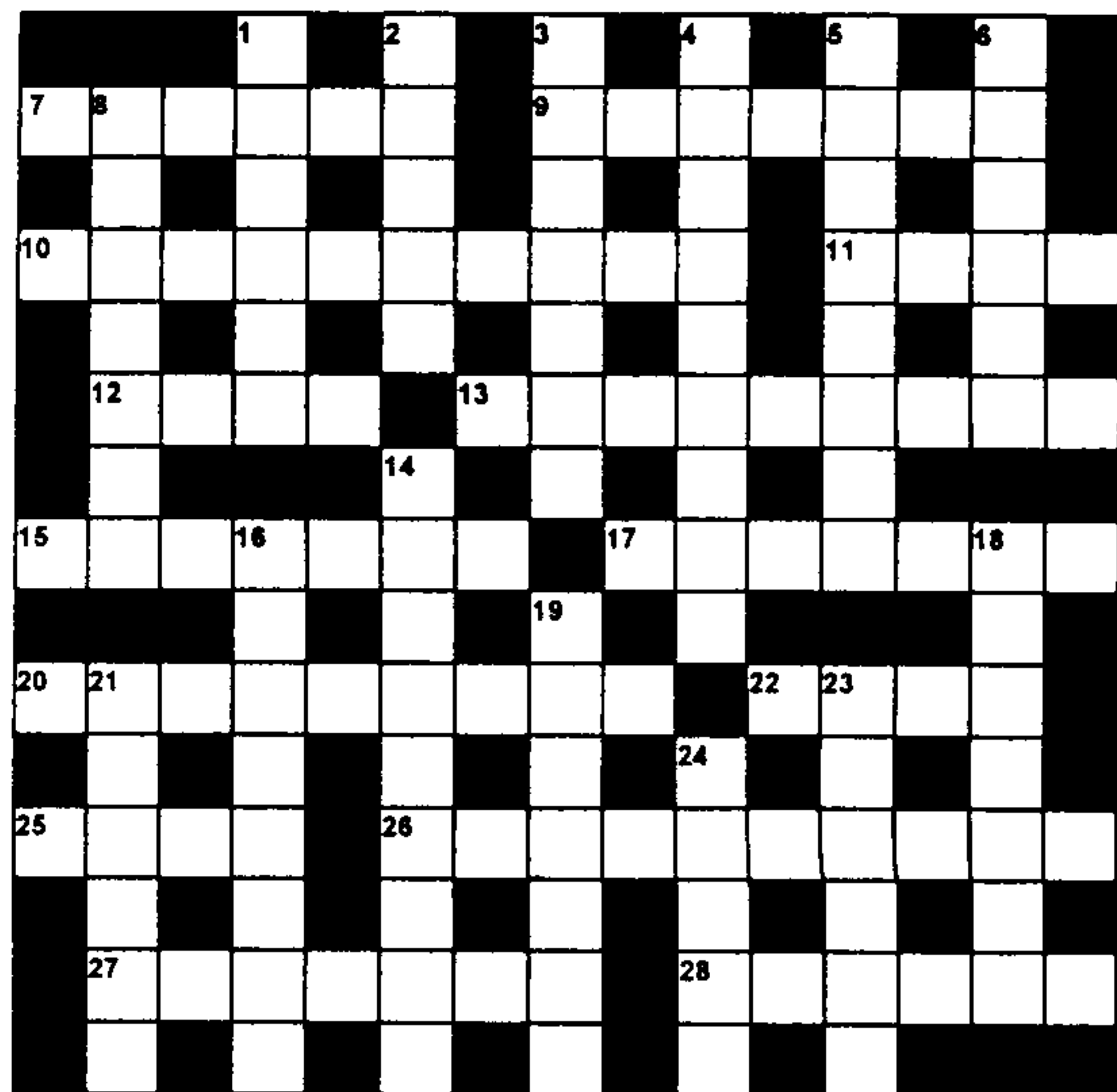
HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA



EYE CROSSWORD 62

by Cyclops

£100 prize



ACROSS

- 7 Talk show with teeth? (6)
9 (see 1)
10/16 Favourite patriotic piece rendered by temperance society (with new leader) plus celebrity (4,2,4,3,5)
11 Sexy opera — a belter (4)
12 Diana's beginning to admit being depressed (4)
13 Craven ass desperately after your vote? (9)
15 He lost his suit in Dallas once (7)
17 Major's debut: electorate finally ditched (7)
20 His organ is fingered by many — God! What a small specimen! (4,5)
22 The capital's disgusting loos (4)
25 Parliament laid off! (4)
26 Source of easy money — topping exercise! (5,5)
27 Fooling around with fucked-up poet is good (7)
28 Unnatural union backed by sexually ambivalent type gate-crashing dance? (3-3)

DOWN

- 1/9 Pathetically sad cow, the bain of Blair and co. (6,7)
2 Democrats lead, Republicans initially behind: Clinton got out of it (5)
3 Manufactured by the Sun about Church authority (7)
4 Eye's adherents? (9)
5 Having relations with a large number sums up America (5,3)
6 Hostilities not started by low-grade Labour leader (6)
8 Conservative leader in beach-wear produces public embarrassment (7)
14 Sort of Christian recreation? (4-5)
16 (see 10)
18 Sexy pictures, etc. of Brenda distributed to London gallery (7)
19 Boycott dishes out more gab (7)
21 Mystic Meg's one-time craft: going topless (6)
23 Plagiarism is at the heart of the writer (6)
24 Nick's left to cry — he got off lightly (5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 27.09.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 61

Winner: Lorna Rusbridge

ACROSS: 5 Dalai Lama 8 Riot 10 Spew up 11 (see 7)
12 Ethelred 15 Enigma 16 Eli 18 Slush 20 SAS 21 Minors
23 Sing Sing 25 The Lords 27 Ariane 29 Spud 30 World at One

DOWN: 1 SDLP 2 Blow me 3 Gaza 4 Freebies 6 Imports
7/11/24/13 As the actress said to the bishop 9 OJ Simpson
13 (see 7) 14 Drugs 17 Iron Lady 19 Hansard 22 Screw
24 (see 7) 26 Serb 28 Nuns

Ye Daily Telegraph

Nov 5th 1605

Edited by Sir Thomas Charles Moore

Only Ten Groats on
a Monday!

GUY FAWKES BOOK LAUNCH TO BE HELD IN PARLIAMENT

by Our Westminster Correspondent Andrew Marr-vel

Ye notorious terrorift, Guy Fawkes, haf taken advantage of a loophole in the Parliamentary code in order to launch his new tome of memoirs "Bonfire of Ye Vanities" in the crypt of the Houfe

of Commons.

"It hath a very good plot" he said "and gunpowder and treafon to boot."

But ye Fury hath erupted on ye back-benches. Squire Bufton of Tufton, the

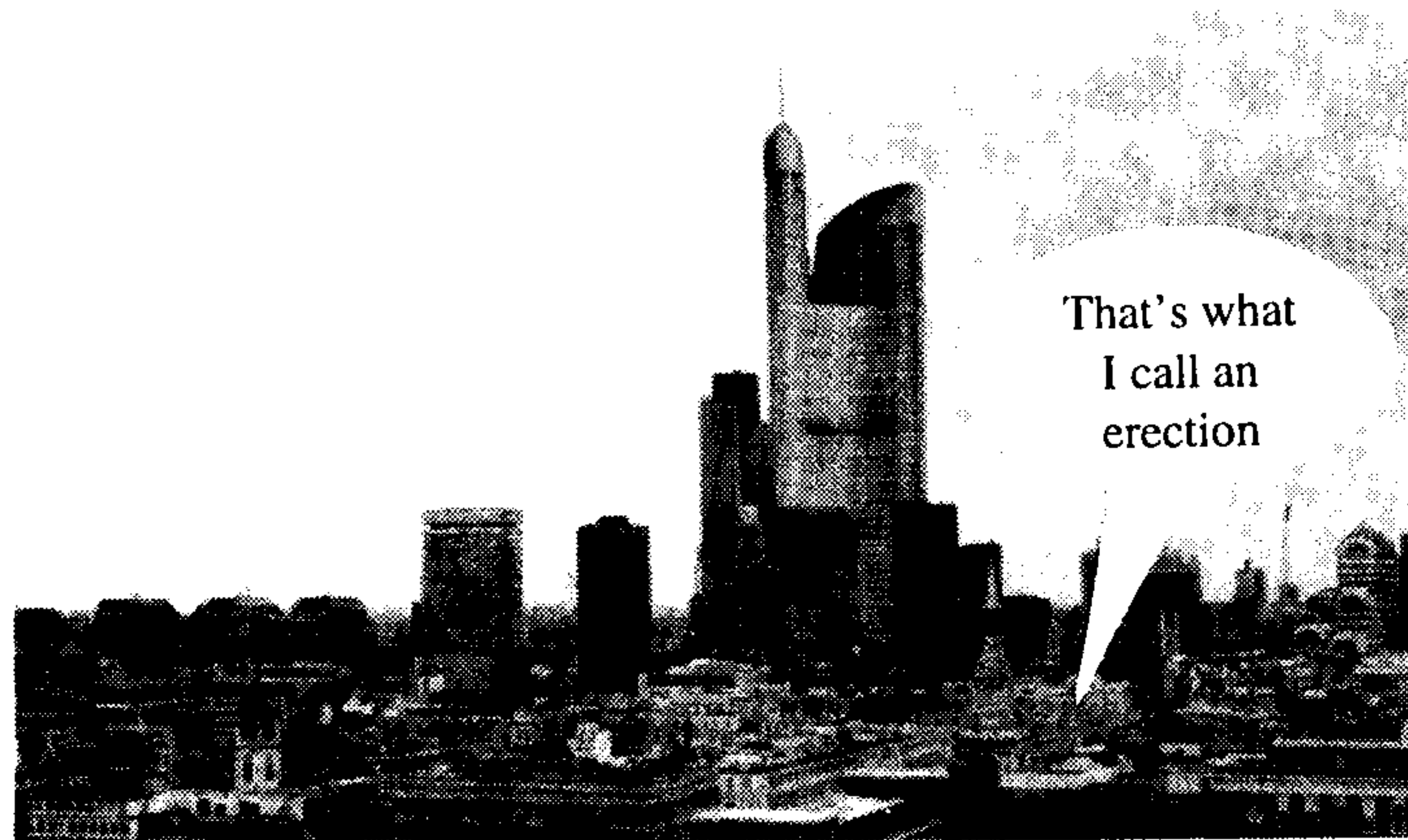
member for the rotten borough of Lyme fwold, has declared:

"It is an outrage. Allowing a known villain into ye hallowed portals if scandalous. Is thif enough?"

However, a group of fupporters of Fawkes led by a Mr Catesby haf denied that there was any fecurity risk.

"Mr Fawkes is a fatesman and peacemaker," he faid. "His book is dynamite. It will go like a bomb."

Sir Norman Gets It Up



New from Gnome Books

THE HOLY UNBELIEVABLE



by Arturo Loon, Sigismundo de Haq
and Vernon von Cobblers



What is the link between the following?

- ✦ A mysterious sign in a remote church in the French village St. Eaune-Les-Creaux
- ✦ A masonic ritual dating back to Merovingian Templars who invoke the name "Peregrine" before drinking the blood of gerbils
- ✦ Poussin's famous allegorical painting "Les Morons d'Angleterre" in which a group of

shepherds are depicted gazing at a stone inscription reading "Et in Burlington Arcadia Ego"

- ✦ An enormous cheque paid out by Gnome Books to three literary adventurers with the enigmatic instructions "Go down to the library and copy it all out of the last book we did"?

Finally the truth behind Christianity is revealed in a book that will change the course of history.

Also from Gnome:

The Borman Conundrum

IS MARTIN BORMAN still alive and living in Stoke Poges? No, of course not, but author Kevin

Beaugus fills up 500 pages with his fantastic theory that the top Nazi was smuggled out of Germany in a tin of grapefruit by Winston Churchill, and began a new life as a newspaper editor using the pseudonym "Max Hastings". The definitive book on British Intelligence. If anyone buys it they haven't got any.

Enid's Mum Writes in to Private Eye

Mrs Ludmilla Rancid, 89, has written to Private Eye following our article last week in which we suggested her daughter, the TV personality Enid Rancid, was a power-mad lunatic who distorted reality to suit her own ends.

Dear Private Eye,
Shame on you!

I was very upset when I saw in your magazine a nasty article about my daughter Enid. You have obviously never met my Enid otherwise you would not have written what you did. Shame on you Mr O'Booze for your horrid piece!

Let me tell you a story to show how nice my Enid really is. One day when she was a

little girl Enid found a hedgehog dead in the garden by our dustbins. She immediately rang up the police accusing the next door neighbour of poisoning it and got the father arrested and the children taken into care. And that is not all. Now, thanks to Enid, there is a "Hedgehog Line" in our street where you can still make anonymous allegations about your neighbours and hedgehogs.

There are many similar stories of her kindness, but Enid is a very busy TV celebrity and charity worker and she has not got time to dictate any more details about what a wonderful human being I am.

Signed in her absence,
E.R.

pp Mrs Ludmilla Rancid.

FROST SCOOP



The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47½

Monday

Today we are at war. Once again Britain stands shoulder to shoulder with our American allies, as we did in 1940. I first heard about my decision to declare war on Iraq when at 3 o'clock this morning I had a top secret call on my special hotline from Mr Clinton's secretary. She told me that the President was very grateful for my support and that I should have a nice day when I woke up. When I did wake up at 7 o'clock, I immediately rang Mr Rifkind to ask him what was going on. "Mr Clinton has fired a lot of cruise missiles at Mr Saddam Hussein," he explained, "but it is nothing for us to worry about. None of them hit anything and it was all just something to do with Mr Clinton's election anyway."

"I see," I said, "so our two great countries have a common aim. To be re-elected."

Tuesday

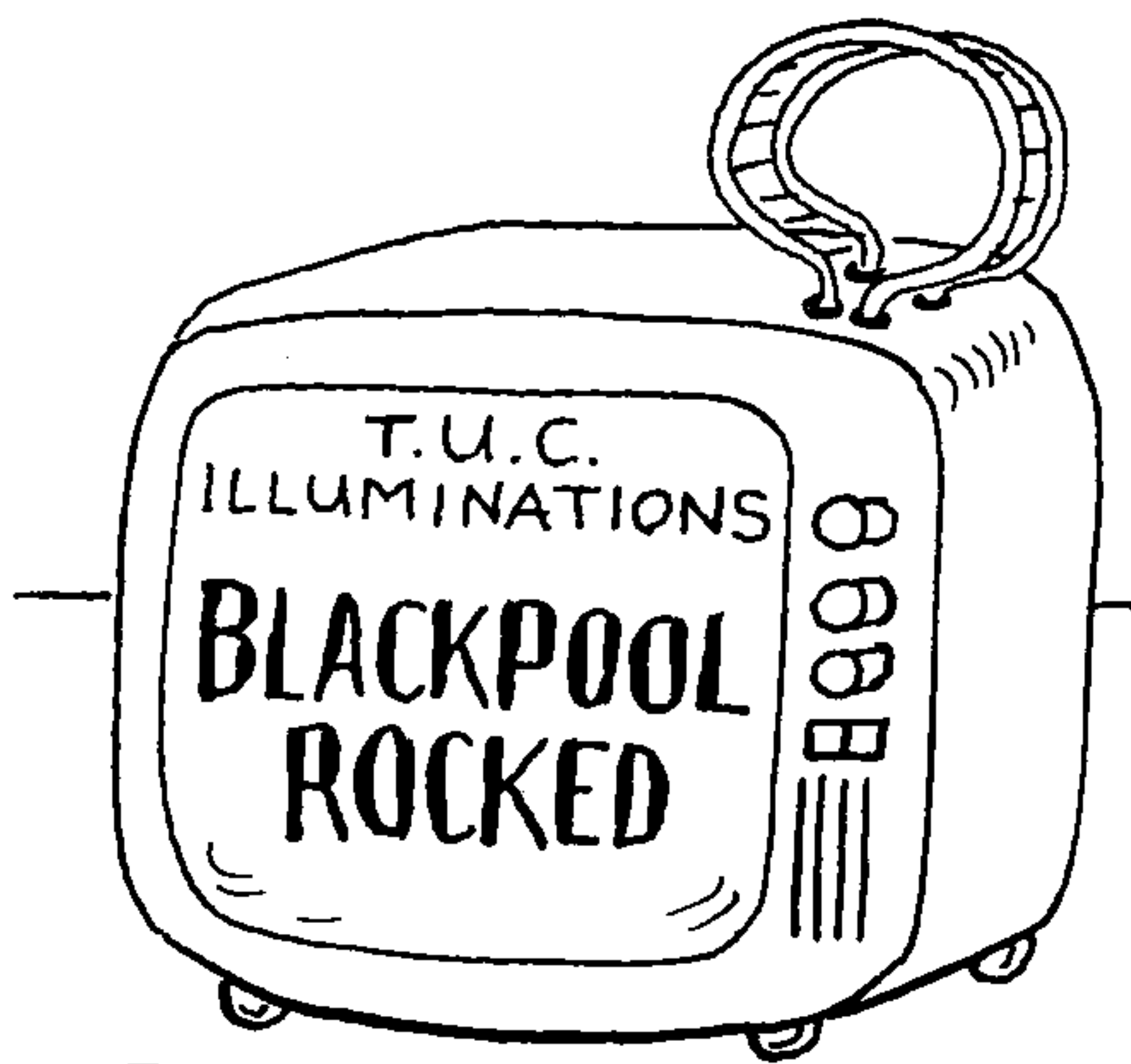
Mr Dr Mawhinney has come up with another brilliant idea for winning the election. He and Mr Screaming Lord Saatchi have done another of their posters showing a big empty purse with nothing in it except a pair of red eyes. The message is crystal clear. If people vote Labour they will go mad and start imagining that there are sinister aliens hiding in their purses waiting to kill them with their devilish laser beams. This gave me the even more brilliant idea that our slogan for the election should be "New Laser, New Danger". Mr Mawhinney said he thought this was very clever, but perhaps we should save it for the election after next.

Wednesday

Mr Dr Mawhinney burst in this morning to say "I think I've really got it this time, prime minister. The secret weapon to end all secret weapons". "You mean you're going to use my poster idea about New Laser?" I asked. "No, you idiot, prime minister," he joked in his funny Irish voice, "I mean Mrs Major. People are more interested in her than they are in you. So we're going to make her the centrepiece of our election campaign."

I was in no small measure incandescent with doubt about this idea, since it seemed to be much worse

than my "New Laser It Isn't Working" slogan. "No, you don't understand, prime minister," he said. "What we are selling is you as the tough, decisive, leader figure and your wife as the nice, homely, sensible one who knows what to do with old pieces of cheese." "What does she do with them?" I asked. "You will find out when Mr Sir David Frost does his one hour special interview with her called 'Norma Wisdom'. She will tell Sir David that she collects together all the stale bits of cheese and



puts them in an old ice-cream box in the freezer." "Oh," I said, "I wondered why the ice-cream tasted so funny."

Thursday

Today I had to get up very early to go on a special election-winning tour of the West Country which is in the west of the country. We went to a town called Weston-Super-Mare which has become famous because it is the place where my friend Lord Mr Archer was born. I was taken to the beach with some television cameras from the popular local news-and-travel programme Weston-Super-To-See-You. On the sand were crowds of typical holidaymakers, all wearing suits with blue rosettes and holding Union Jacks. They all cheered when I appeared and even the director held up a placard saying "Cheer" because he was not allowed to make a noise during the recording. We got home to London just in time to watch the news while we were eating our supper of frozen cheese sandwiches. There was nothing about my trip to the West Country but Mr Blair was on telling the trade unions that his government would bring in huge tax cuts and outlaw strikes. Who does he think he is? Mrs Thatcher?

Well, I have news for Mr Blair. If anyone is Mrs Thatcher it is me. Not that I am. Oh no.

Friday

Today was the most unhistoric day of my week. I had to break off from my very important job of running the country to go to the wedding of my brother Terry's daughter Terylena in Sutton. At the reception afterwards Terry had put me on Table 24, which was at the back of the marquee, saying he knew I wouldn't want to be conspicuous. I was sat next to an old man called Mr Pritchett who said that Terry had worked for him when he was manager of Woolworth's in 1952. "Those were the days," he said. "This country's completely gone to the dogs since they all ganged up on Maggie and put that idiot in." Then Terry got up and made a very long speech, which included a number of so-called jokes which in my judgement were in very poor taste, eg when he said that it was good to see that someone in the family was doing something decent, ie Terylena marrying Simon. He ended the speech by presenting the couple with a matching pair of antique garden gnomes made by Father and which he claimed I had painted, which could not possibly be true, because these two gnomes had red and green hats and all my ones were blue or yellow but never red and green. Then someone came in with a telegram for the happy couple which said that their honeymoon hotel at Disneyland, the Pocahontas Lodge, had burned down. Terylena was very sad and said it wasn't fair because she'd always wanted to go to Disneyland. My wife Norman stepped in to console her and said that if she really wanted to see some cartoon characters come to life she and Simon could come to spend a few days at Number Ten instead.

Saturday

Today Mr Dr Mawhinney has come up with an even more brilliant scheme than his last scheme (which was itself in no small measure brilliant even though it involved my wife Norman going on television instead of me). Now he tells me I have written a personal letter to 2.6 million people.

"That must have taken me a very long time," I said.

"No, Prime Minister," he replied, "we have a machine now that does that."

"Ah, Mr Waldegrave," I said, catching on quickly as ever. "Anyway, what is this personal letter about?"

"It tells the wavering voters" the Party Chairman explained, "that Labour will be dangerous in power and that things are much better under the Conservatives."

"And when will they receive this letter?" I asked.

"Just as soon as the postal strike is over and they have cleared the backlog. Probably just after the election."

BROTHERS' HOTEL PUNCH-UP LEADS TO SPLIT

by Our Man At The TUC Lunchtime O'Asis

The one-time supergroup set to take the country by storm seems certain to break-up amidst amazing scenes of acrimony.

The stars of so-called Britlab have fallen out again but this time it's for good.

Says feuding band leader Tony Blur, "I've had it with my brothers. Their unruly behaviour is a disgrace. How dare they walk out of their jobs? It's totally unprofessional".

Heart-throb Tony continued, "I can be a success as a solo act. I write all the words anyway. Who needs loud-mouthed yobs anyway?"

Insiders however blame the split on the new girl in Tony's life.

Minimum Wonderwage

"It's woman trouble," said one. "Tony's obsessed with the blond harpie called Maggie. It's ruined him."

Mag for it

Cynics however accuse Tony and his brothers of staging a publicity stunt to try and stay in the news.

"Tony is always nicking ideas from his heroes and pulling the band to bits is just an old idea that the Conservatives did years ago."

EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

GOD'S FURY OVER "SENSATIONAL" BIOGRAPHY

by Our Religious Affairs Correspondent
Humphrey Carpenter of Nazareth

A cosmic row erupted last night over a new book entitled *The Bible*, based on tape-recorded interviews with God, in which he apparently attacks almost everybody who has ever lived.

Among the chief targets of his indiscretions were:

- Adam - "a tremendous disappointment - charming but ineffectual."
- Eve - "an actress and schemer, though a lovely girl."
- Noah - "a bit wet - ha, ha, ha."
- Job - "whingeing old bore, always coming to me with his problems."
- Jezebel - "a bit of a tart, but a lovely girl."
- David and Jonathan - "they never really liked me, because I wasn't one of them."

However, the Almighty's

strongest criticism was apparently directed at the former Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt. Rev. Robert Runcie, whom he described as "an indiscreet old woman who couldn't keep his mouth shut. He was always getting into trouble. But at least he had a good war."

Tape Recording Angel

Last night a spokesman for God was quick to deplore the revelations (particularly Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15). He said that God had "only been speaking for background. He had made it clear that his remarks were not to be taken as Gospel."

He added "The Almighty was under the impression that nothing would be used until after his death, which was not likely to happen for some time."



Jimmy Knapp
General Secretary of P.M.T. (formerly A.S.L.E.E.P.) explains the latest move in the rail dispute.

Urr oberammergau geronimo step we gaily marie's wedding old macdonald had a happy meal FURTHER STOPPAGES INEVITABLE legoland at Windsor Longleat safari park jimmy shand neil shand REFRESHMENT BREAK eric cantonana shananana say goodbye white heather club leather club MANAGEMENT STICKING POINT ariadne auf naxos THREATS AND COERCION TOWARDS MY MEMBERS millennium tower norman foster mulholland falls gwyneth paltrow UNAVOIDABLE DISRUPTION bocaccio ruud gullit (continued throughout Autumn)

Advertisement



~ Emma ~
E A U D E A R

A new fragrance for
Today's Woman

A hint of smugness, a whiff of hypocrisy and the distinct aroma of sour grapes.

Emma, for the woman on the move.

Guaranteed to drive the Prime Minister in your life wild!

When a man you've barely met comes up to you and invites you to join the Liberal Democrats, you *know* you're wearing Emma.





SUPERGRASS WALKS FREE

New Scandal Breaks

by Our Legal Affairs Correspondent
Joshua Rozenbeard

One of the country's top criminals was today at liberty once more following his amazing let-off by Britain's legal system.

By any normal standards, Michael Howard should be paying his debt to society after

being found guilty of releasing highly dangerous drug dealers onto the streets and dealing in massive amounts of low quality excuses (popularly known as "shit").

Super-arse

But it emerged yesterday that when caught red-handed in a blatant act of incompetence he gave the authorities the name of his associate, Justice Cocklecarrot of the Old Bailey. Said Howard:

"The Judge told me to let out these drug dealers. I had nothing to do with it. He's the one you should be talking to, officer, not me. Honest, let me go."

The public are, however, outraged that Howard has escaped yet again.

Storm Grows Over "World's Tallest Tower"

by Our Architecture Staff
Sir Gawaine Stamp

Conservationists were horrified yesterday by a new plan to build a tower 10,000 feet high in the heart of London.

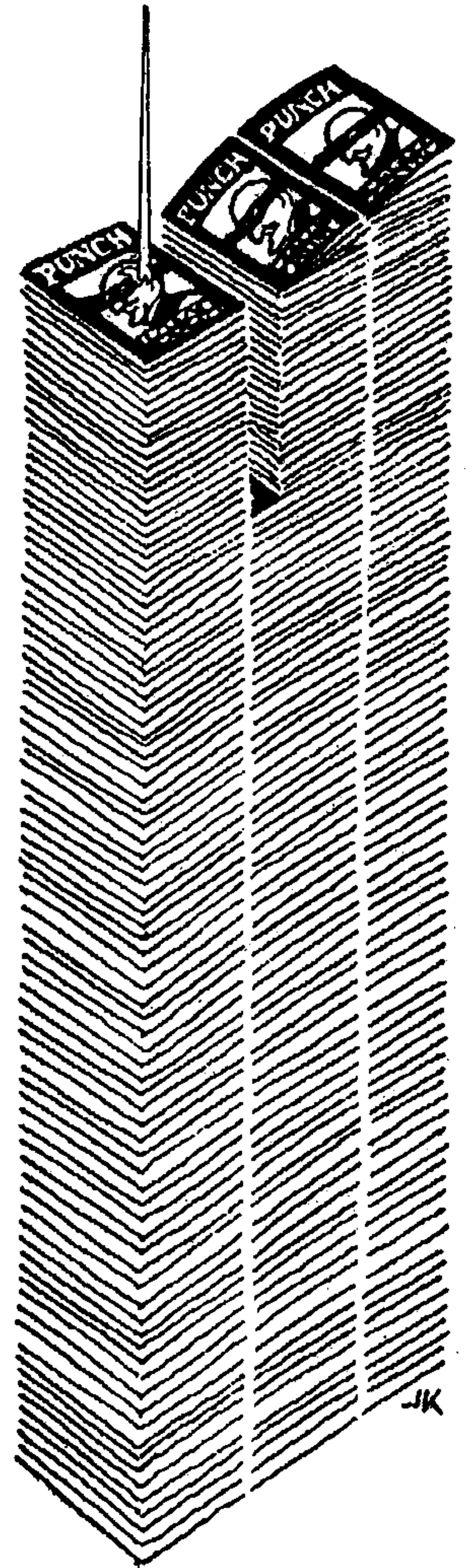
The tower, the brainchild of Middle Eastern entrepreneur and architect Mohahammed Al-Fayed, is to be constructed entirely out of unsold copies of *Punch*.

Said Fayed "my tower will be visible from dentists' waiting rooms all over Britain".

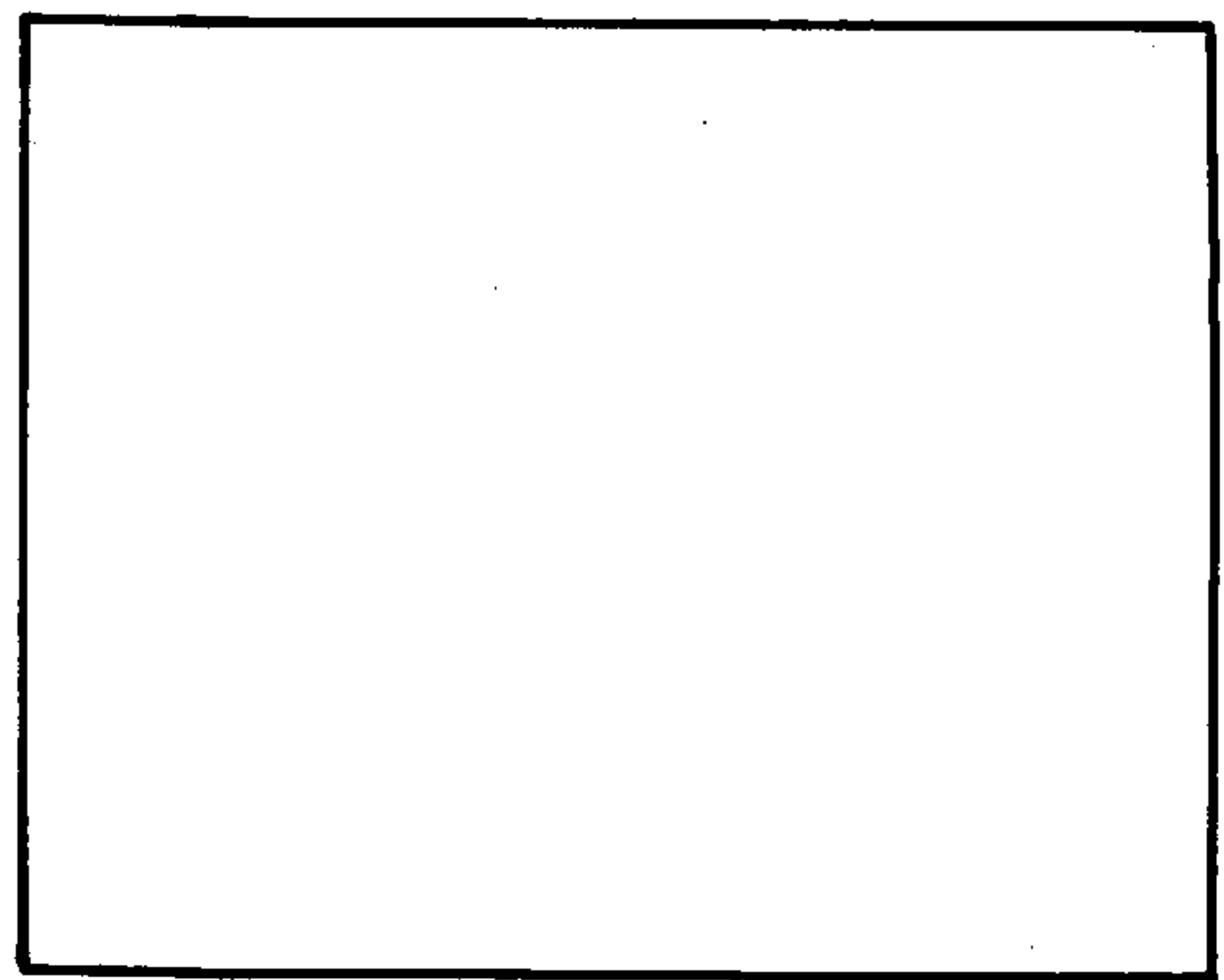
Norman Architecture

The new structure, which is designed to mark the millennium, will employ a revolutionary building technique whereby the unsold copies of the humorous magazine are compressed into 2,374 centimetre cubes and then stacked on top of each other until they reach the sky.

Said architect Al-Fayed "we have had to allow for a certain amount of swaying on the top storeys, particularly by Peter McKay after lunch".



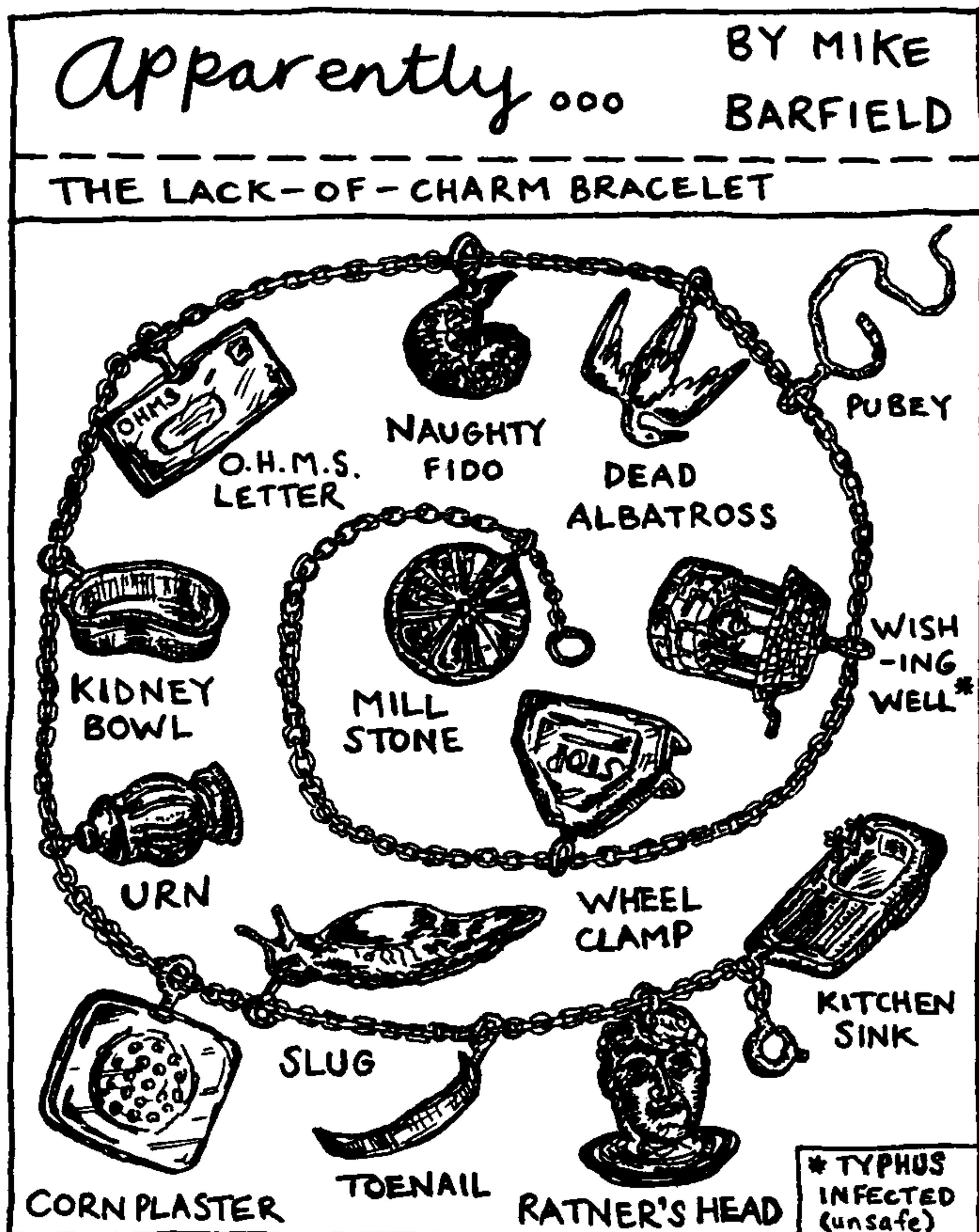
How It Works: The Stealth Bomber



How Stealth looks on those Iraqi radar screens.

The Stealth bomber is the most sophisticated weapon in the US military arsenal. The US's state-of-the-art technology has developed a bomber so ingeniously designed that it can never be detected by either side. Even when it has attacked the target and delivered its payload, there is no visible sign that it has ever been there. Recently used in Iraq with great success. After waves of attacks by hundreds of Stealth bombers on Saddam's secret Command HQ, not even Hussein himself was aware that the attack had taken place and the buildings were still standing exactly as they were before.

Next Week: Have We Got Cruise For You – how the smart missile is so smart that it wins the US election without hitting anything.



SOCCER



NEASDEN SLAUGHTERED IN EUROPEAN FIRST LEG

by E.I. Erewego, our man in the stands with 500 duty free cigarettes and a free sample of Pacco Cristodioulou For Men body spray.

Elba, Wednesday

THE SOCCER world was rocked to its foundations here on the tiny island of Elba last night when North London Relegation League giants were given a lesson in football they will never forget by a team cobbled together from fishermen, waiters and kids hanging around the stadium hoping to get a game.

Once again the yawning chasm between the English and continental teams become apparent as Neasden's footballing pride were forced to retreat under attack after attack from the ball-juggling wizardry of A.C. Elba, cup and league double winners for the last fifty years. Said Enzo Parafini, Elba's coach, "since we are the only team on the island, we knew we had to raise our game when playing an opponent, but even so, we expected more from Neasden. Their tactics of kicking into their own net is totally naive and posed no threat to us at any time."

Kneemesis

Even in defeat, Ron Knee, 59, the tight tipped, ashen faced Neasden boss was fulsome in his praise of the Elba squad, singling out their striker, Beppe Napolioni. "We went to his restaurant for a drink after the match," he said. "His wife cooked the lads some fish and chip pizzas to cheer them up after the fifteen goal hiding. Beppe makes his own wine and has quite

a large cellar, or he did until he told us to treat his home as if it were our own."

Leaning Ron of Pisa

But there was no disguising the disappointment of the Neasden fans, Sid and Doris Bonkers. Said a tearful Sid: "I am gutted. There are virtually no bars to smash up or any cars to set on fire."

UF*** Cup

However, Knee was in no mood to concede that Neasden's 15-0 drubbing by the Italians spelt the end to his hopes of his club making its mark against Europe's best. "I am looking at steel tipped boots," the soccer Supremo explained, "and I am not ruling out iron bars concealed in the players shorts."

Ron Knee is 59.

LATE SCORE

AC Elba	15
(Pevsner [o.g.] 15)	
AFC Neasden	0



Cybermen Behaving Badly

THE INDEPENDENT

Pornography or Arse?

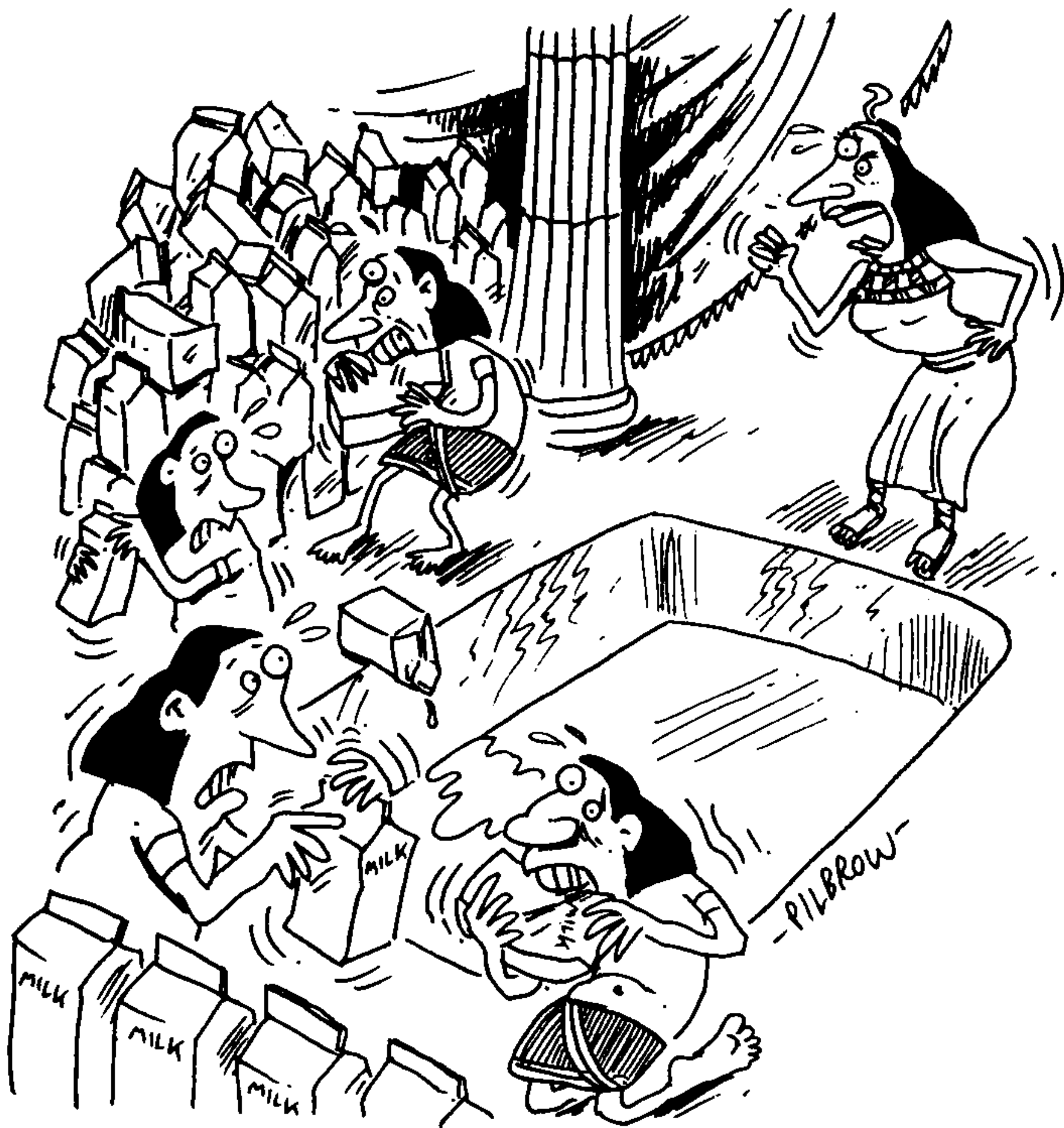


Today the *Independent* asks whether it should be banned for putting this on the front page. Is the work of controversial editor Andrew Marrplethorple to be taken seriously as journalism? Or has the *Underpantent* just reached the bottom? **Suzanne Boore** finds out.

Celeb

LIGGER





"Isn't my bath full yet!?"

NOW SHOWING

NOT emma



An amazing new film without Emma Thompson in it. And she didn't even write the screenplay. Not quite as good as the film with Emma in it but very similar to films with Emma in them. By Jane Austen who is very like Emma. NOT Emma – but with her Mum and her Sister.

Coming Soon

GERRY ADAMS

Dir. Neil Jordan

Jordan's biopic charts Republican visionary Adams' statesman-like career from the early days of trips to the local garden centre in search of weed killer for his "science projects" to beer and pretzel sandwich parties with the President of the USA.

Cherie to Edit Eye!

We are proud to announce that the next edition of Private Eye will be edited by Ms **Cherie Blair**, the distinguished QC and wife of the leader of the Labour Party, Mr Tony Blair.



Here is a taste of what you will read in the next Eye.

A Taxi Driver Writes

David Blunkelt
(Cab No. 274):

"Blimey, see those trade unionists on the telly? They've got a nerve, 'aven't they? Going on strike and annoying the public? Know what I'd do when I got into power? String 'em up, it's the only language they understand.

And another thing. See them Euro's trying to tell us we can't give our kids a clip round the ear'ole? Blimey! Never did me no 'arm. I'd like to give 'em a good hidin'. It's the only language they understand, apart from French, German, Finnish and all that stuff.

I 'ad that Mrs Thatcher in the back of the cab once. What a wonderful woman, guv. An inspiration to us all.

Plus

All your old favourites (Except Dave Spart who's too left wing) including:

✓ **Lord Gnome** – "Why I'm giving all my money to Tony Blair's New Labour Party."

✓ **The Glenda Slagg Profile** – "Tony Blair, dontcha love him?"

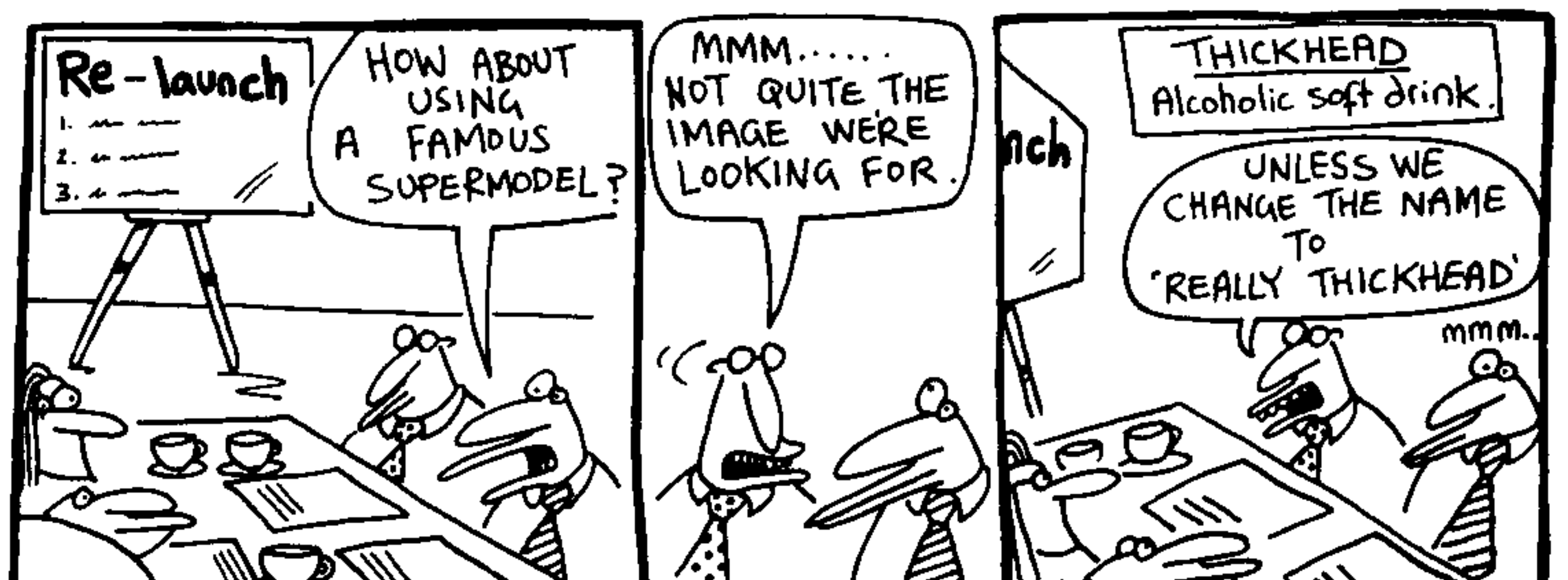
✓ **Literary Review** – Ken Follett's brilliant new novel, reviewed by Barbara Follett.

✓ **E.J. Thribb** – "So. Farewell then the Tories..."

All this and more in the next issue of "Cher-Eye", edited by the wife of our Prima Minister-in-waiting! Geddit?

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



So, Mr Major Bond, you are still Prime Minister. How amusing!

You may have thought in recent weeks I had gone rather quiet. Perhaps you thought you had seen the back of me, your old friend Sir Jammy Fishfinger.

But as usual, Mr Major, you have made a big mistake.

All summer while you were sunning yourself in the South of France, I, Sir Napoleon Bonapaste, was not so idle.

Today, after months of careful planning, working day and night, I can unveil to you, Mr Major Bond, the secret weapon which will carry me to supreme power. Heh, heh, heh.

Today I can tell the world what they have all been waiting to hear. The names of my elite Guard, the carefully chosen shock troops of the Referendum Party, the candidates who are going to sweep the country at the next election.

Not a single one of

From The Referendum Bunker

Bulletin No.94

Achtung!



your pathetic Conservative MPs will be left. Carla! Show Mr Bond the secret army which will spell nemesis to all his pitiful dreams!

(Italian siren in black leather mini-skirt and t-shirt bearing the legend "New Marmite, New Danger" presses button to lift steel curtain revealing the Super-Candidates sitting in leather chairs, while Classic FM's Ride of the Valkyries booms out from bank of giant speakers.)

Mr John Aspinall, millionaire businessman and zookeeper.

Mr Sebastian Tesco, like me a grocer, and great-great-grandson of the founder of the world-famous supermarket empire.

Mr Mark Leeson, the brother of the

distinguished banker.

Mr Nigel Twytte-Goon, my godson who enjoyed the inestimable advantage of an education at Eton. Unlike you, Mr Major, although like you he failed all his exams. Take a good look at him. He will be my Minister for Fishpaste.

Professor Sir Alan Branestawn, the world-famous economist and the only man who predicted the Great Crash of 1923.

You look pale, Mr Bond! Are you frightened of Mr Aspinall, with his highly-trained team of gorillas? They can smell fear you know, even from this distance. Let us see a little demonstration.

(He snaps fingers and a swarthy Greek

waiter in tennis shorts is thrown to the gorillas who tear him limb from limb.)

You see, Mr Bond, everybody has his uses, even this poor little Greek boy. And what happens to Taki today will happen to your Mr Howard tomorrow. And then, Mr Bond, it will happen to you. Heh, heh, heh.

And now Mr Major I am a busy man. I begin to tire of you. I have to go to write my speech for my great Party conference which will win the longest standing ovation in history. I have already timed it. It will last for a thousand years!

It will end with the historic words: "Who rules Britain? Me? Or not?"

(Sir James then climbs into underground hot-air balloon and flies off to Mars to address a mass-audience of primitive life forms on the dangers of the single currency.)



"I only said you could get your ears pierced"

Your TV Tonight

Rhodes 9.30 BBC2

THE first in a lavish £10 million, 20-part costume drama series about the turbulent career of the larger than life adventurer, buccaneer and rebel Sir Rhodes Boyson. Episode one shows his early barefoot years in the Lancashire milltown of Rossendale before he grew up to become headmaster of a north London comprehensive school. Later episodes will

chart his eventual rise to fabulous power and riches when for two years he was Under-Secretary for Education under the all-powerful and mysterious tribal leader known to her followers only as "She" and who claimed to be immortal.

CAST IN FULL

Cecil Rhodes Boyson	Leo McKern
Cecil Parkinson	Pete Murray
"She"	Sue Pollard
Eve Pollard	Samantha Fox
1 Million Assorted Zulus	Chief Buthezi and friends

(by courtesy of the Aspinall Zoo-Loo Experience, Hythe, Kent).

Mr Lucic added: "They were doing everything in good faith. If they had not there would obviously be a need to investigate."

He welcomed Mr Newing's promise of a review of force policy on brothels, saying that the federation did "not want our members exposed to this situation".



PAMELA HUTCHESON
RGN &
ONC cert

**Congratulations on your BSE Honours
Degree in Psychology at Manchester
Metropolitan University**

Daily Telegraph

Chester & District Standard

DIARY

You wanna know what? Dieting means loving yourself. It's been a tough journey, but I have come to terms with the realisation that I employ food as a primary coping mechanism. And I also use it for eating. It's a problem I've known since childhood. Like many other so-called "world-famous celebrities", I was once a child. One year I was seven years of age, the next year I was eight, the year after that, nine. I've spoken to a great many normal everyday kinda people on my show — women who believe they were married to Lee Harvey Oswald in a previous life, infertile couples who have been kidnapped by UFOs, women who've secretly married their best friend's pet dog, guys who like to dress up in diapers to murder their kid sister's estranged husband's niece — and many of these regular guys have told me that they have been there too. But that's something I've got to confront on my own, I've got to live with that pain, I've got to pass through that threshold, 'cos sure as hell no one else is going to do it for me. You know what? I think I'm gonna cry.

So I've got to find the child within myself, and tell that durn kid that if she don't quit eating those jammy donuts she'll have some-thing to answer for. Let me tell you about my diets. Oh, I been through so many diets. It was 1987, I had just won the Emmy Award for Fattest Female Talk-Show Host on Daytime TV. I should have felt great about it, but deep down I felt like a loser. I think I'm gonna cry. It was then that a good friend told me about the Quacksville World Center All-Day Binge Diet System. This diet taught me not to combine vegetables with meat and starch. So instead of having Two Sprigs of Lettuce with Five Fatty Pork Chops, I'd be strict with myself and cut right back on the lettuce.

But no matter how many times a day I undertook the Fatty Pork Chop diet, I seemed destined to put on more weight. In six months, I rose from 13 stone 5lbs to 15 stone 6lbs. My appetite meant that I was getting through clothes at an alarming rate: in one night alone, I ate two cardigans, three socks and my all-time favourite gold dinner jacket. But I have a profound spiritual sense, and I knew the Lord was asking me to eat so that one day I could diet. In 1991, I had just won a Golden Globe Award for Outstanding Flabbiness on a Black



DIETING WITH OPRAH

Artiste. I should have felt over-the-moon, but instead I felt just awful. So I switched to the Double Cream, Avocado and Chewy Toffee Diet. I kept to that diet all day, every day. But still I put on 10lbs here, 32lbs there. But when I was between mouthfuls I had the good fortune to meet the top physiologist and dietician Bob Greene. Bob straightaway confronted the problem. "Oprah," he said, "Oprah. There is only one sure way to reduce your total body-weight by 3lbs in 5 seconds. Oprah, you must confront the child within yourself and get her to hand over that heavy wallet of yours." I think I'm gonna cry!

I didn't know it then, but that meeting was to change my life forever. Bob took a scientific approach to weight-loss. He explained that the more food you eat, the heavier you become. The way I understand it, instead of eating 10 Big Macs and 5 Banana Splits, you should eat just 5 Big Macs and 2½ Banana Splits, and before long you'll halve your total body-weight. And I discovered there's a world of fruits and veg out there just waiting to be discovered, all so healthy and good for you: toffee-apples, strawberries and cream, banana fritters in deep batter and chocolates shaped a bit like carrots or pumpkins. In the bad old days, I couldn't pass a packet of potato chips in the shopping mall without wanting to open it. But thanks to Bob, I don't do that no more: I just pop it in my mouth, bag an' all. That way, I save myself quality time for aerobic work-outs.

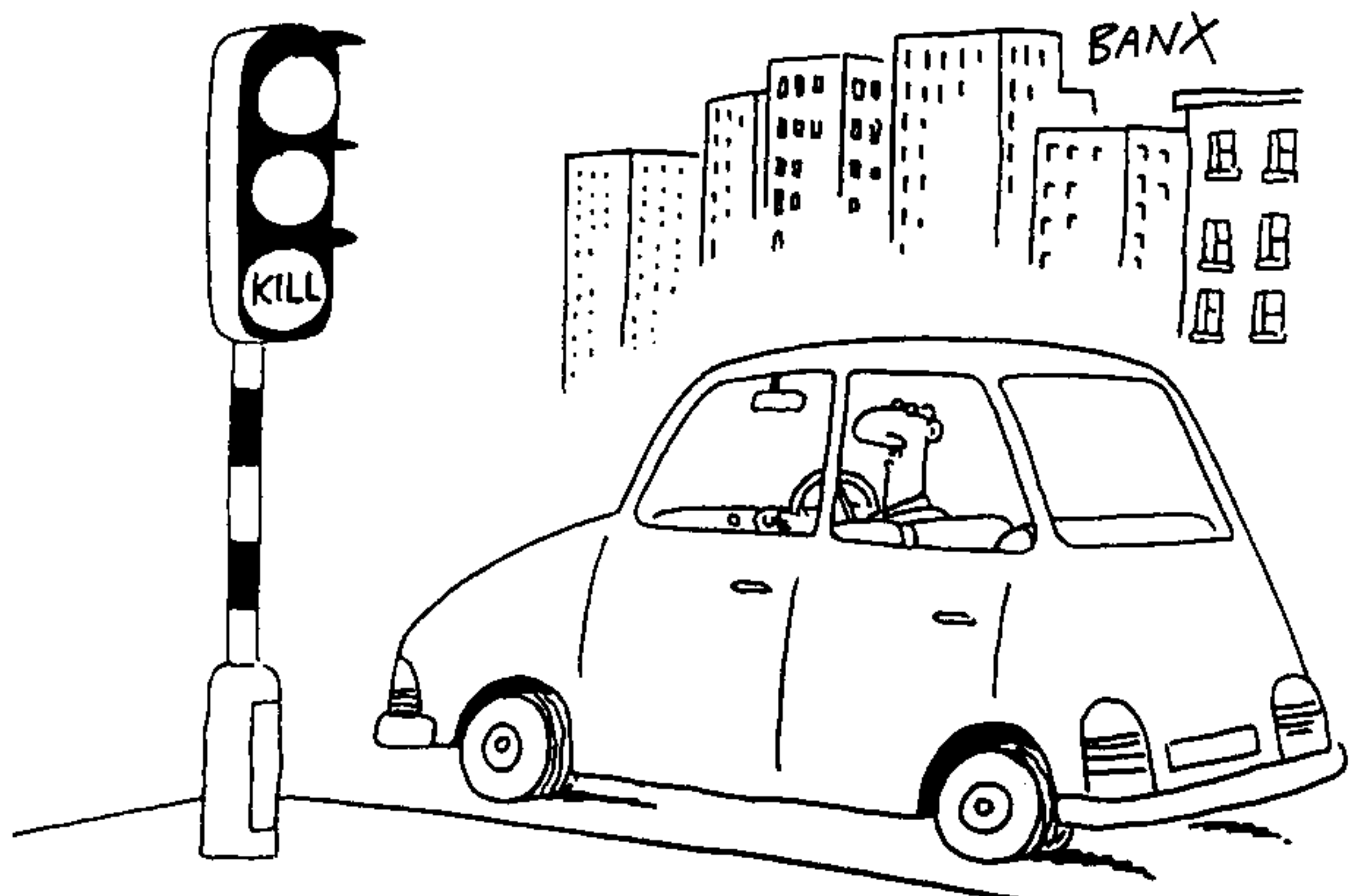
I deeply want to share with you my work-outs. A lot of ordinary stay-at-home moms — and believe me, that's the most important job

on this earth, my God it is, I think I'm gonna cry — ask me, "Oprah, is it, like, painful for an award-winning talkshow host and international role-model to have to workout every day?" But I tell them Bob taught me to make a commitment to prioritise — and to prioritise my commitments. "Oprah," he said, "Breathing is important. Try never to forget to breathe. Breathing is performed primarily through your mouth and through your nose. Medically speaking, it is important to remember to breathe through one or both of these vital orifices at all times. But do not overdo it: if you breathe more than feels comfortable, you may find that you are overprioritising your oxygen, and dizziness may follow. And do not attempt to breathe through either of your knees, particularly if you are wearing jogging pants. Knees are not designed to be breathed through, though they are excellent for kneeling with, and invaluable for bending your legs."

Bless you, Bob: you changed my life in the most profound and fruitful way. And now I want to share Bob's wisdom with you all out there. Buy our book, and overnight you'll lose pounds. Nine pounds, to be exact. And ninety-nine pence. Oh, no! I think I'm gonna cry.

My Prayer: Help me, Lord, to pass by a bowl of nachos with creamy prawn salsa dip and heavy on the peanut butter without spooning it up with both hands and hurling it into my mouth. Lord, let us talk of personal growth. Thanks to you, Lord, my personal growth is increasing day by day, 11 stone 10lbs yesterday, 12 stone 3lbs today. Give me a break, Lord, and stop using me to dip into the candy and cream storage container in the king-size frigidaire.

I reckon I was under 10 stone 5lbs when we welcomed the international celebrity Charles Manson to the Oprah studio — and by the warm grin on Charles's face, I could tell he was impressed. In the Sixties, Charles and his assistants helped so many celebrities gain instant weight-loss — and he's kept his own weight down just beautifully ever since. "How's the pain, Charles?" I asked him. "Are you still hurting deep down inside?" Charles assured me he's confronting his past guilt — his craving for Hershey bars, his passion for ice-cream — so that now he can at last begin to grow as a human being. So thank you for sharing that joy with us, Charles, thank you for making that connection. You know what? I think I'm gonna cry!



• Prince Charles & Diana — During the good times

Correction

IN an article by Mervyn Pauley yesterday, an error resulted in Sir Patrick Mayhew being referred to as Sir Patrick Mayhem. This was unintentional and we apologise for any misleading impression.

Belfast Newsletter

Daily Graphic (Ghana)

Literary Review

Icon trick

Icon

Frederick Forsyth
(Bantam, £16.99)

FREDERICK Forsyth — "Freddie" to his admirers, who include Baroness Thatcher — is a big one for nobby props in his dustjacket photos. Generally, cufflinks and cigarette holder and clubland tie sprout from a body carefully posed in front of a shelf of leather-bound books.

No international thriller writer since Ian Fleming has made so much of his Englishness in an essentially American genre. But there are signs in *Icon* — Freddie's ninth thriller and, he hints, his last — that the publishers are worried about the bankability of this act. Bantam has slapped the bar code and ISBN number across the cufflinks and cropped the cigarette holder out of shot. Only the tie and *Encyclopaedia Britannica* remain.

A changing world, then, and one no longer so reliably Anglophile. But don't tell Freddie. You can see why Thatcher likes his stuff so much — she once told an interviewer she was "re-reading" one of his books — because they are fantasies of Britain as an imperial superpower: a kind of Falklands campaign in prose. Market pressure has forced Freddie to make the hero of the new one a CIA man, Jason Monk, but it's London that's running things.

This historical timeslip is especially batty because *Icon* is notionally set in 1999. Yeltsin has resigned early in his second presidential term because of ill-health and the vultures of Soviet history are battling over the scraps of democracy. A Zhirinovsky-like mad dog, Komarov, is running for the presidency on a stated platform of restoring law and order and a covert one (the reader eventually learns) of restoring the Russian monarchy.

Tosh? Probably; but Freddie's famous as the Mystic Meg of thriller writers: Yeltsin conveniently came clean about his dodgy heart in the week of publication, during which FF's 70s hit *The Odessa File* — a yarn about Nazi gold and the attempt to establish a Fourth Reich — was also revealed to have been pretty much true by the release of government papers. In old tabloid parlance, Fred-

die's *The Man Who Knows*. But knowledge does not make novels.

The word "knowingness" is usually employed in literary criticism to refer to jokey post-modernist winking, but Freddie represents a plonkingly literal knowingness. He can't stop telling us things he knows. His favourite tense might be called the present show-off: "The Government Schedule (GS)... is the pay-scale for civil servants of the federal government..."; "Half-way up St James's Street is an anonymous greystone building with blue door..."; "This is the difference between a friendly and a hostile polygraph test..."



It does not seem to occur to Forsyth that this careful factual patina might be fractured by his odd habit of mixing fictional and factual characters. Although Monk is made-up and Komarov has everything of Zhirinovsky's except his name, the real-life CIA traitor Aldrich Ames is a central player and Thatcher and Gorbachev have walk-ons in 80s flashbacks. Yet the right-wing Brookings "editor of the *Daily Telegraph*", who made his name as a Falklands war reporter, is not Max Hastings but "Brian Worthing".

English writers setting stories beyond their shores always face a problem with dialogue. Most settle for a generalised stilted inflection in the speech. Some, with novels set in Europe, transcribe native phrases and trust to the reader's education. Freddie's really in trouble because his natural narrative voice is a hunt-ball drawl in which eyes are "baby blues" and money is "folding stuff".

So, in *Icon*, setting himself to do Russian, he bizarrely relies on stiff upper-lip Blighty with the odd spot of italic. "The whole thing has been a complete... *razebaistvo*", snaps one character, with Freddie helpfully adding: "The word means fuck-up." This spectacle of characters suddenly remembering where they are is repeated throughout the novel. "He doesn't half pong," says a Ruskie on discovering a corpse, before suddenly switching idiom from Anthony Buckridge to Dostoevsky to add: "Ten copecks to a good bottle of Moskovskaya it's a homicide."

To be fair, Freddie really doesn't

want to go on writing these things. After his tight and original early books — *Day Of The Jackal*, *The Odessa File*, *The Dogs Of War* — he jacked it in. Drawn back by the demands of school fees and farming, he retired yet again, only to lose much of his fortune in the financial scam enacted by Roger Levitt. The last few books have been written only to replenish his stocks of folding-stuff. Now he says he's sodding off again. Wise move, Freddie, because all you can say about *Icon* is that the whole thing is a complete *razebaistvo*.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ NEWS that Fergie is resorting to lecture tours of low ranking US universities and lending her name to puff pieces in *Paris Match*, will send a shudder through her publisher, Simon and Shuster.

Despite the hype, Fergie clearly doesn't think her literary ventures, an autobiography and children's books, are going to bring in much cash. And she's probably right.

Already Rupert Murdoch has dropped the Budgie cartoon series from his American Fox TV network, automatically wiping out sales of the (inferior) books on which it is loosely based. Although Lachlan Murdoch accompanied the ex-duchess on her last trip down under (fee: £25,000 plus expenses) to open another News Corp TV network, it seems certain none of the company's British papers will bid for book serialisation rights.

Fergie hopes the Express or Mirror groups will be desperate enough to pay £500,000 for her autobiography, but overhanging the negotiations is Texan financial consultant John Bryan. Although Sarah has consulted m'learned friends in an attempt to prevent one of his associates from telling all, there's still the prospect that Bryan will find a way of publishing his much more candid insight into Fergie's life to coincide with the official toe-free version, thus destroying its sales and any serialisation.

□ BOSSES of Penguin Books tend to run for cover at the slightest hint of trouble. So it was no great surprise when Penguin empress Clare "The Queen" Alexander suspended publication of Amanda Craig's novel *A Vicious Circle* when she received a letter from Craig's one-time lover, book critic David Sexton, warning that he might "have to take legal action".

Sexton complained that the novel's literary hatchet-man "Paul Pinsent" was clearly based on him. To prove it he helpfully appended a list of similarities.

Though Amanda Craig is now claiming that "Pinsent" is not Sexton but a work of creative imagination, the correspondence is astonishingly close. The lady doth protest too much. But then so does the critic. The story has now changed from one of Craig's obsessive conduct to Sexton's. If the purpose of Sexton's letter was to suppress this fictional portrait, it has back-fired spectacularly — as anyone could have warned him. *A Vicious Circle*, which would otherwise have commanded no more space than dozens of other novels, has received acres of free publicity. Sexton rather than being viewed sympathetically as the target of a heavy-handed bit of literary revenge is in danger of being seen as the real life villain of the story.

JUST FANCY THAT!

FOR the past two weeks A.N. Wilson's new novel has been riding high in the London *Evening Standard*'s bestseller list. Oddly, however, it is conspicuously absent from everyone else's — including the authoritative *Sunday Times* list.

A.N. Wilson is the literary editor of the London *Evening Standard*.

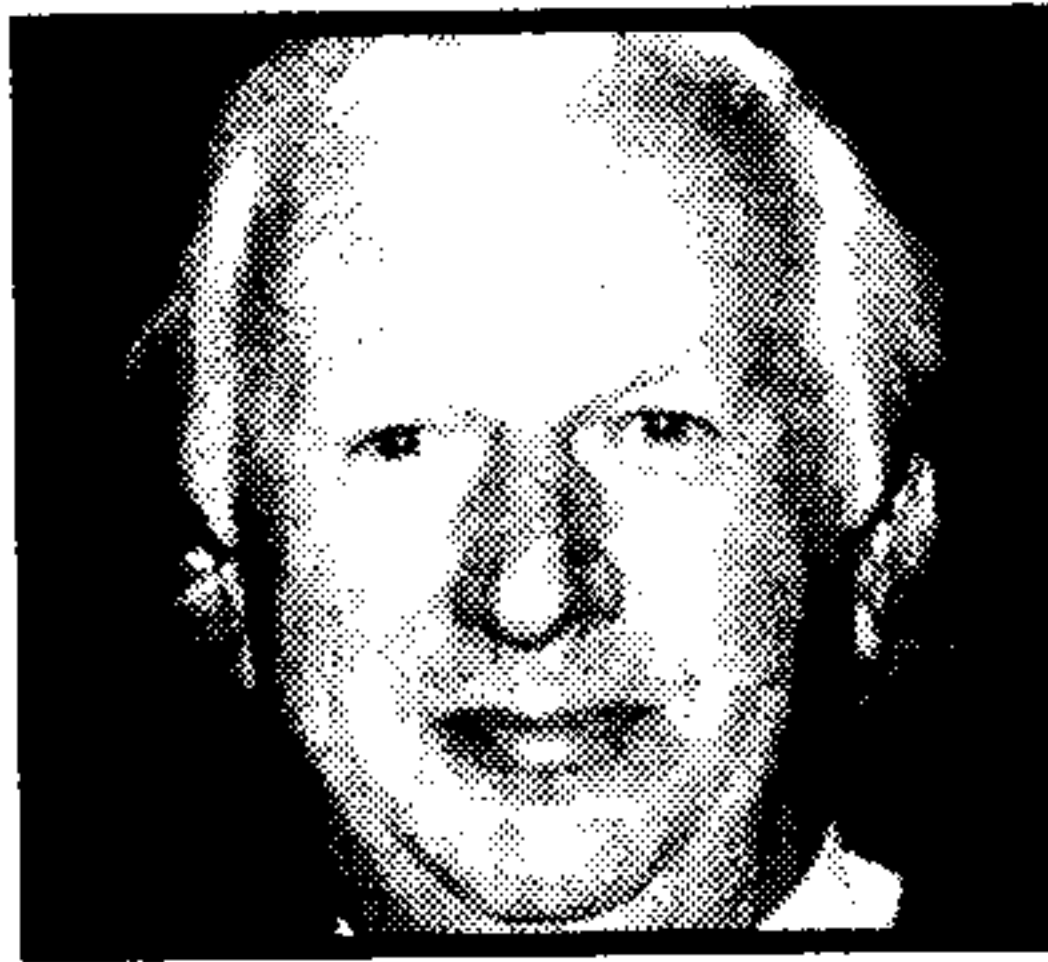
'Bookworm'



footnotes

PRIOR

COMMITMENT



WHEN he was Margaret Thatcher's first secretary of state for employment, Jolly Jim Prior talked all the time about the urgent need for democracy in the unions and for trade unionists having to have a legal right to vote.

Now Jolly Jim is Lord Prior, chairman of Britain's biggest manufacturing company, GEC. At this year's annual general meeting on 6 September, with his usual charm and poise he introduced the company's report and accounts and asked for questions. He was asked at once by a representative of PIRC, the corporate governance monitors, when shareholders were going to be allowed to vote on the report and accounts. A hideously embarrassing silence followed. Jolly Jim was shocked. So was Lord Weinstock, the veteran

president. So was everyone else. The truth is that it has been GEC policy for generations not to allow mere common or garden shareholders to vote on the report and accounts, but not one of the democrats on the board could bring themselves to say so, let alone explain why.

Also silent was the group finance director, D.B. Newlands, who came to the GEC board in 1989 from Touche Ross, where he was a senior partner. The auditors of GEC when Mr Newlands was appointed were, er, Touche Ross. The auditors appointed without a new tender after Mr Newlands joined the GEC board were, er, Touche Ross. A new director was promptly appointed to GEC's audit committee: er, Mr D.B. Newlands.

For the last financial year Touche Ross, now Deloitte Touche, was paid £4.1 million to audit GEC and got another £156,000 for other little jobs which are not disclosed.

Welsh masonic boom

■ JUST as the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons hoped that the row over the freemasonry of Sir Frederick Crawford, chairman of the new criminal cases review commission, had died down, Mr Gerrard Elias QC was appointed leading counsel to the Waterhouse inquiry into child abuse in North Wales homes.

Labour MP Rhodri Morgan wrote to William Hague, Welsh secretary, protesting about the appointment. Elias is a member of the "Blue Lodge", the very exclusive Dinas Llandaf lodge in Cardiff. Another very prominent former officer of the lodge is Gwilym Jones, parliamentary under secretary at the Welsh office. The lodge's top office holders over the past few years include no fewer than three former Tory leaders of Cardiff council — the late Ron Watkiss, John S. Richards and Jeff Sainsbury; and the former Tory MP for Cardiff West, Stefan Terlezki.

Morgan wrote: "You must surely be aware that

freemasonry will be an issue in the Waterhouse inquiry, since freemasonry within the North Wales Police has always been pointed to as a possible factor in the long delays in exposing and solving the child abuse problem in Clwyd and Gwynedd."

In a recent case involving North Wales police, Mr Justice Drake, who had studied the papers and recognised that freemasonry might play a prominent part in the case, declared his own interest as a senior mason. So why was such a prominent freemason appointed as senior counsel to an inquiry in which freemasonry will keep cropping up?

From Hague, so far, no reply. From the grand secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England, Commander M.B.S. Higham, a waspish note asking Morgan if membership of freemasonry "disqualified otherwise suitable qualified candidates for a public appointment". Answer — if that appointment involves the influence of freemasonry — yes.

A Surrey tale

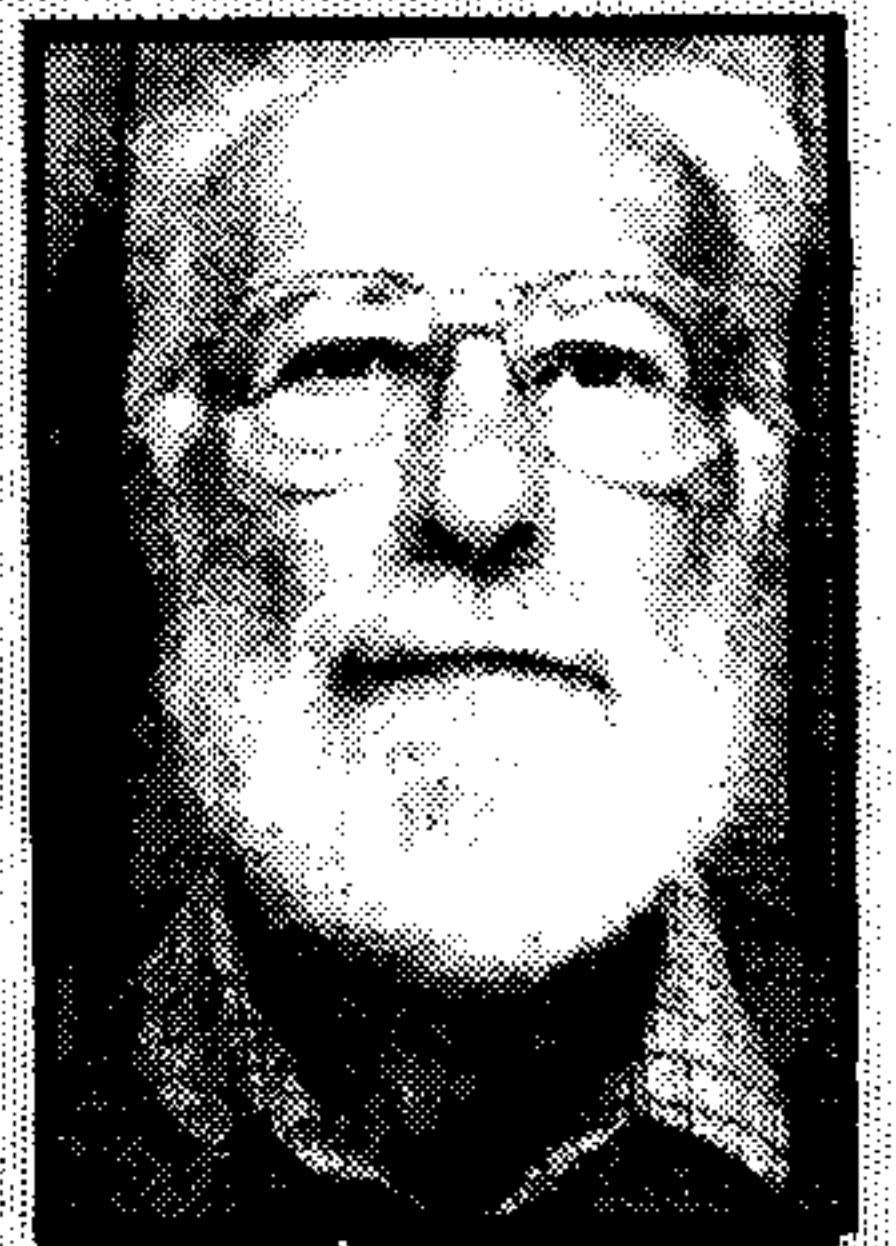
■ PENSIONER Les Seagers was delighted when he was allocated a two-bedroomed cottage by Surrey county council four years ago. It was in a secluded estate, and the council surveyor, Michael Byrne, promised him security of tenure.

Mr Seagers's pension income is £460 a month. In June this year, his rent was £195 a month. But that month the rent went up to £347 a month — and next June it will shoot up again to £500.

When Mr Seagers pointed out that he couldn't possibly afford that increase, the county council told him to apply to Sutton borough council for housing benefit. Whoops! Sutton couldn't pay housing benefit because Mr Seagers was on a 21-year lease. Surrey insists on this lease for all its tenants to stop them buying their homes at a discount. So the old man will be forced out of his home, and into a bed-sitter in a sink estate.

Surrey county council, which is run by the Liberal Democrats with Labour support, is not at all shocked by the 105 per cent increase in a pensioner's rent in a single year. "His rent will still be below the current market level and we consider this to be fair rent," says a spokesman. The council says the rise will affect tenants in all Surrey's 90 council houses.

PS: The eviction of Les Seagers will be the responsibility of W.S. Atkins plc, which runs Surrey's houses. The head of property services at W.S. Atkins is Michael Byrne — the former county council surveyor who assured Les Seagers he was secure in his house for life.



LES SEAGERS

TIME Warp

■ The special issue of the US news magazine Time on the mysterious recent TWA airliner disaster carried a breathtaking puff for Tom Thurman, who is leading the forensic inquiry into the airliner's wreckage.

Time described Thurman as "a legend" largely because he "solved an almost perfect crime" — namely the 1988 Lockerbie bombing of a Pan-am airliner. Time also commended "Thurman's amazing command of detail" in matching a fragment of a circuit board to an intact unexploded bomb found in Togo in 1986, which Thurman traced to Libya.

If anyone at Time read *Private Eye*, they would know:

● That Thurman's "circuit board" theory was highly suspect.

● That the theory is the only forensic evidence against the American government's two Libyan suspects.

● That Thurman had been denounced in an internal FBI memorandum by Dr Frederick Whitehurst, one of his senior predecessors at the FBI, in a case in which a judge had been killed by bombs. Dr Whitehurst alleged: "Thurman circumvented established procedures and protocols in the assignment of evidence to examiners... he testified to areas of expertise that he had no qualifications in, therefore fabricating evidence" (*Eye* 881).

OUT OF COURT

■ THE settlement of the long-running libel action between former England coach Terry Venables and Alan Sugar was not a complete victory for the Tottenham Hotspur chairman.

Sugar took out of court the £100,000 paid in by Venables's publisher Penguin when its insurers calculated that they would have to shell out £100,000 even if Venables won.

Sugar's £100,000 may not last long, however. He may be liable for the costs of both sides after the payment into court six months ago. Six months costs when the lawyers are £300-an-hour Clifford Chance (for Penguins) and Herbert Smith (for Sugar) are unlikely to be much less than, well, £100,000.

Meanwhile, what is left of El Tel's explanation for his resignation as England coach — that he would be spending too much of late 1996 and 1997 in court?

His libel action with Sugar has been settled. So has his libel action with the *Sun* over allegations that he had rejected offers of mediation with Tottenham. In fact Venables had suggested a mediator — the *Sun*'s solicitor. The *Sun* has shelled out £47,500.

Venables's libel actions against the *Mirror* and BBC's *Panorama* are unlikely to reach court. Even Venables's right to sue Spurs for unfair dismissal may be lost in the endless litigation between his former companies and the club. He may never go to court at all.



THE GREAT BUSINESS NAMES OF OUR TIME

CONSERVATIVE: ESOP FABLE



PETER GUMMER is one of the prime minister's closest friends, and his brother is secretary of state for the environment. But there were other reasons why he became a Lord so close to a general election.

Gummer's contacts in the media are as legendary as his ability, with their help, to turn what looks like hopeless defeat into sublime triumph. His finest hour coincided nicely with John Major's entry into Downing Street in late 1990.

On 24 October that year, Shandwick, which Peter Gummer had built up since 1974 into the biggest public relations group in the world, announced excellent profits of £20 million, up 41 per cent since the previous year. John Jay, then of the *Sunday Telegraph*, took time off from singing the praises of his hero Robert Maxwell to ask the rhetorical question: "Why has Gummer succeeded where others have failed?"

Naturally, after such glowing publicity Shandwick's share price rose — from 109 pence to 118 pence in two weeks. Then, on 6 December, came the Shandwick agm. The ebullient and confident Gummer of the previous few weeks was suddenly overcome by doubt. His performance at the meeting, reported the *Independent* (7 December 1990), "had all the conviction of Neville Chamberlain on his return from Munich".

Stock exchange punters were depressed by Gummer's announcement that he was selling two million of his own shares at 90 pence.

Would anyone have bought them on the open market? We shall never know. For at the same agm Gummer announced a brand new "employee stock ownership plan" (ESOP). To this captive purchaser group, which he had created, he announced he was selling his shares at 90p each. Then suddenly things started to go wrong. The *Observer* (9 December 1990) reported: "Analysts are perturbed at the nature of the disposal, and that institutional investors were not given the chance to sell at a similar price."

These worries increased as the share price continued to slide. By 19 December 1990 they were down to 63p. There were more published "concerns" about the mysterious ESOP. The *Daily Telegraph* of that date printed the chairman's explanation. "Mr Gummer said the ESOP is to motivate staff." Twenty staff were further motivated the following day when they were sacked. City rumbling about the strange sale to ESOP continued. The *Investors Chronicle* (21 December) reported: "Critics say the shares should have been traded in the market."

A secret revolt against Gummer spread through the institutional investors in his company. They demanded to know what right Gummer had to sell so many shares at such a high price to a captive internal buyer when the share value was slithering. The row raged over the new year holiday. On 3 January 1991 Gummer and his critics stumbled to a compromise. Instead of selling two million shares at 90p to ESOP, he announced, he was selling only 1.25 million at 51p. At the same time and at the same price he sold 419,000 shares to his personal pension fund. Altogether, instead of the expected £2 million, Peter Gummer had to make do with a miserable £850,000. Not one of Major's close friends — not even the saintly and ennobled Jeffrey Archer — more deserved a peerage and a ringside seat for the prime minister's election campaign.

Hammersmith Pally

■ SHOULD the heads of newly-privatised further education colleges commission building work on their homes from firms which do extensive work on their colleges paid for with public money?

The *Eye* asked Mrs Anne Illis, principal of Hammersmith and West London college, about work done by a small local construction firm, Willfields Developments. The college confirmed that Willfields had won a lot of contracts from the college since its incorporation in 1993, all after competitive tender; and that Willfields had in the last two years done work at Mrs Illis's home worth £1,400 (which had been invoiced and paid in full by her) and two much smaller jobs at the home of the deputy principal, Richard Holden.

The *Eye* asked Mrs Illis if she felt there was "any difficulty" with awarding contracts paid for by public money "to firms which did personal business with those authorities?"

The college replied: "The college considers the information to which you refer to be irrelevant and unremarkable. Any suggestion of impropriety about the nature of the works done or the award of contracts by the College cannot be sustained... A copy of your fax has been passed to the College's lawyers."

LABOUR: HERE'S TO YOU, MR ROBINSON



HOW did Geoffrey Robinson, Labour MP for Coventry North West and new chairman of the *New Statesman*, grow so stinking rich that he owns a luxury villa in Tuscany where he can entertain Tony Blair? The answer is simple. The success of the engineering combine, Transtec plc, which Robinson joined in 1987.

In the early years Robinson was its executive chairman. He ran the company full time — or as full a time as he could while representing the people of North West Coventry. In 1993 the group reported pre-tax profits of £11 million. By the time the results were published in April 1994 Robinson was sounding a note of warning. "For the group to succeed, we must contain our cost base, and

maintain our product innovation and development," he trumpeted. "It is a stiff task but we have the financial discipline, the technical and marketing expertise and the will to achieve it."

During the next few months the company made dreadful losses of £12.4 million. The share price fell to 41½p. The stiff task he had forecast was plainly too much for Mr Robinson, who resigned as executive chairman (running the show) to become a non-executive chairman (figurehead). A new chief executive, Richard Carr, plus an entirely new management team, took over in November 1994. In a special statement, Mr Robinson hailed this "new executive management team" which "has been selected both to put the current business on a stable footing and to develop the group further...the group now has a team of managers with records of achievement in the range of industries and disciplines." The share price is now 103p.

People are very polite at Transtec, so no one asked what happened to the financial discipline, not to mention the technical and marketing expertise, Mr Robinson had insisted the company had in full measure the previous year. Nor did they complain as Transtec was turned round by the new management team. Nor was anyone cheeky enough to point to the main beneficiary of the success of the new managers: the man whom they replaced, a Mr G. Robinson, whose shares are now worth just over £17 million. Everyone agrees, on the contrary, that no one is better qualified than the multi-millionaire MP to be president of the board of trade in the next Labour government.

Pony Trap

■ MAGISTRATES at Pontypool, South Wales, were faced on 8 August with the following set of facts.

1 A chestnut two-year-old pony kept by Anthony Probert, of Abergavenny, had been so badly starved and ill-treated that it had been taken away by the RSPCA and tended in a horse hospital at Monmouth. At first it could not stand up on its own or walk. Now, after six months' care, it has recovered.

2 One reason for the pony's ill-treatment was that Mr Probert, who earns £740 a month, cannot afford to feed and look after his 16 ponies properly.

The magistrates promptly convicted Mr Probert of "causing unnecessary suffering to an animal". But what did they then do about it?

1 They fined Mr Probert £500 and ordered him to pay £706 costs. This means he will be even less able than before to pay for his horses' feed and care.

2 They ordered the return of the pony to Mr Probert, where it



can be ill-treated all over again.

Alasdair and Jenny MacGregor, who run the Monmouth horse hospital which saved the pony, are law-abiding folk. But they are defying the magistrates by refusing to hand over the pony. They tell the *Eye*: "We want to start a public debate on the insane sentencing policy of magistrates in cruelty cases involving horses."

PROLIER THAN THOU

"Steak. We go for the least fatty and most tender fillet, only now and then since it is so expensive."

From the Nigel Lawson Diet Book, by Nigel Lawson (salary from Barclays Bank: £200,000 a year, plus perks).



In the City

SUSPENDED Morgan Grenfell fund manager Peter Young's only public pronouncement since the sky fell on him and 90,000 Morgan Grenfell unit trustholders indicates that he has decided on the Leeson defence. "I am a scapegoat," he told the *Daily Mirror*.

He went on to blame lazy bosses and greedy investors who were only too willing to believe he was a genius. Sounds familiar? This Leeson soundalike also quickly adopted the Leeson lookalike posture, pushing his wife forward to generate sympathy and put a favourable spin on events while he is supposedly gagged.

As with Nick Leeson at Barings, so with Peter Young at Morgans: there is a large element of truth in the rogue trader's excuse when caught — why didn't you spot and stop what I was doing? The answer is that Young, like Leeson, went to great lengths to make sure he was not found out and, if queries were raised, to lie and dissemble: Leeson about the true purpose of dealing account 88888; Young about the Luxembourg labyrinth he created of brass plate companies through which to warehouse shares in high-risk investments where he was in far too big to get out.

But all the signs were there if only Young's superiors had wanted to read them. Which is why investigators for IMRO may well decide Young had inside help.

Consider the facts. Several of the Luxembourg brass plates were listed in the fund portfolios, yet nobody at Morgans appears to have investigated what lay behind them — despite the fact that up to £50 million had been invested by the European Growth Trust alone. The plethora of unlisted and thereby hard to value, never mind sell, Scandinavian companies was there for Morgans and the fund's trustees to see. So too were the investments in high risk speculations on the Vancouver stock exchange — unrivalled scam capital of the investment world. Winners such as Archangel Diamond and Princess Resources, run by *Eye* favourite and amnesia sufferer Rupert Galliers-Pratt.

That some of these holdings breached the maximum 10 percent ceiling could have been discovered by minimal research, such as contacting the company concerned. Young acquired 26 percent of Princess shares and shares plus warrants equal to 34 percent of Xavier Mines. Princess president Clayton Waite told the Vancouver *Sun* the company had advised Morgans that, as a holder of more than 10 percent, it had to file insider reports with the British Columbia Securities Commission. Morgans never did. The Xavier prospectus disclosed the Morgan stake.

But there are none so blind as those who will not see. And while Young's two European funds

stormed up the performance charts, helped often by favourable valuations of his unlisted portfolio backed up by brokers who had helped him acquire the shares, all was well. The Morgan monkeys wanted to hear, see or speak no evil about Peter Young.

That is why when the smoke clears in a week or so the Deutsche Bank stormtroopers will be carrying out several executions in the executive suite of its British offshoot. It is also why Morgans is likely to be sued by angry investors and fined by IMRO.

Young's highly paid bosses — Morgan Grenfell Asset Management's directors shared £14 million last year with the top pay packet £1.34 million and the average £500,000 — first did nothing and then, when the scale of the unlisted investments became impossible to overlook, did too little too late. Allowing Young to run down the holdings without discovering he was merely moving them from one brass plate to another as there were no other buyers unless he was to take big losses and further worsen an already disappointing 1996 performance.

The bonus-blinded Morgan executives who did not spot or stop Young appear more guilty of negligence than deception, if not fraud — unless it emerges that some knew what he was doing and went along. And that is still very much an open question.

It remains to be established exactly who knew what and when about Young's exotic investments. Certainly it is very hard for investigators to believe nobody knew anything inside Morgans. How was it possible for these investments, in one case of £14 million and never less than £3 million, to be financed? Why were no questions ever pursued about the unlisted companies or the over-investment in little known Scandinavian hi-tech stocks with no track record? Why did no audit of the investments reveal the true scale of the holdings?

The answers to certain of these questions may lie with the brokers through which Young accumulated his weird and not so wonderful collection. Investigators believe Fiba Nordic Securities, the door through which Morgans invested in many of the Scandinavian stocks and Solv-Ex, a US oil play with some unsettling connections, will be in receipt of more than a few questions. So too could be Swedish brokers Carnegie and Vancouver junk specialists, T. Hoare.

What investigators acting for Morgans and IMRO want to know is whether — as seems increasingly likely — Young was lining his pockets offshore off the back of investments made by the two Morgan funds. The curious role of Russ Oil & Technology, seemingly a potential beneficiary of investments made by Young would seem particularly hard to explain.

Certainly Young would not be the first or last fund manager to decide he should enjoy a little

extra bonus from his success. Similarly it is far from unusual for fund managers to take short cuts to boost performance or to cover-up investments that zig instead of zag. Nor would Young be alone in responding to offers of help from friendly brokers to whom he had been a friend by taking large blocks of speculative shares.

How kind it was that Fiba should introduce Young to Swiss lawyers Wyler & Wolf who set up all those Luxembourg warehouses. How convenient that Fiba never became suspicious about the uses Young made of the companies. No doubt like everyone else who was involved, Fiba, Carnegie and Hoare were told and implicitly believed it was all completely approved by Morgans, as Young said. Imagine their surprise therefore...

The IMRO and Ernst & Young (for Morgans) investigations are likely to be completed within a few weeks. Young's initial explanations, like those of Leeson, lacked credibility in the opinion of those present. What has emerged since has not enhanced that credibility. It now appears increasingly likely that the Serious Fraud Office will be called in to investigate not just Young but others inside and outside Morgan.

THE ALREADY much criticised SFO is bracing itself for the possibility that there may be no further Maxwell trials. The proposed trial judge, Mr Justice Buckley, is expected to rule this week (unless he reserves judgment) on Kevin Maxwell's application that a second trial after his acquittal in January would be an abuse of process as oppressive and impossible to be fair due to the tidal waves of prejudicial publicity about his saintly father. Those with knowledge of the case suggest Buckley could be sympathetic to the Maxwell argument. But a ruling that there should not be a Maxwell Two would not be all bad news for the SFO or the taxpayer. At least it would avoid a costly repeat of Maxwell One. What the Maxwell pensioners may think, however, is another matter.

THERE ARE no bizarre features which are sometimes associated with male hanging," the coroner Paul Knapman declared in giving his suicide verdict at last month's inquest into the death in Paris of fully-clothed banker Amschel Rothschild.

So those, including the *Eye*, who speculated that the depressed and reportedly naked banker was engaged in practising Milligan manoeuvres must be wrong. Then so were those who believed the initial official explanation that Rothschild had died of a heart attack. But why a man should suddenly decide to hang himself from a towel rail in a hotel bathroom when he was shortly expected to meet his colleagues still remains a mystery.

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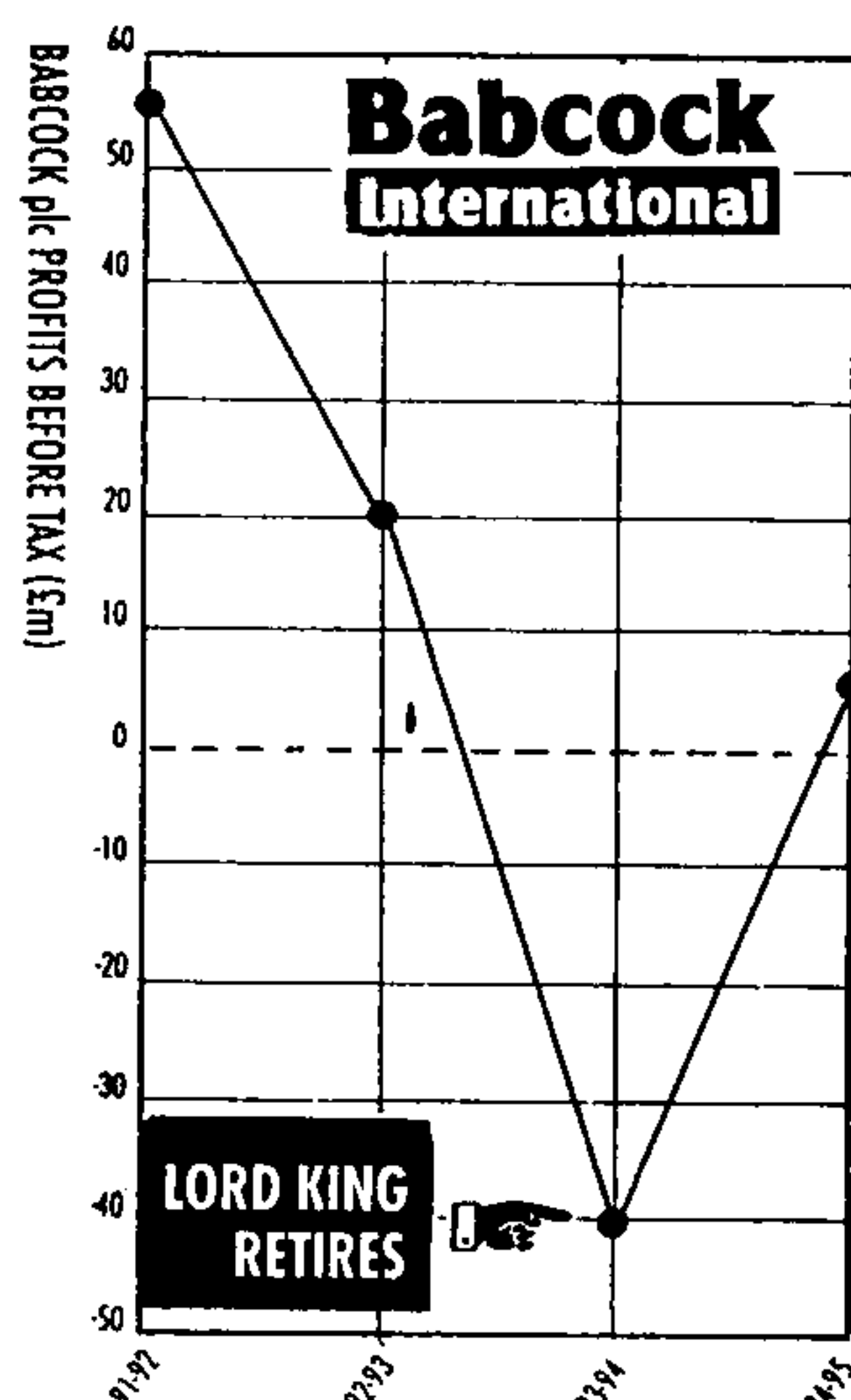
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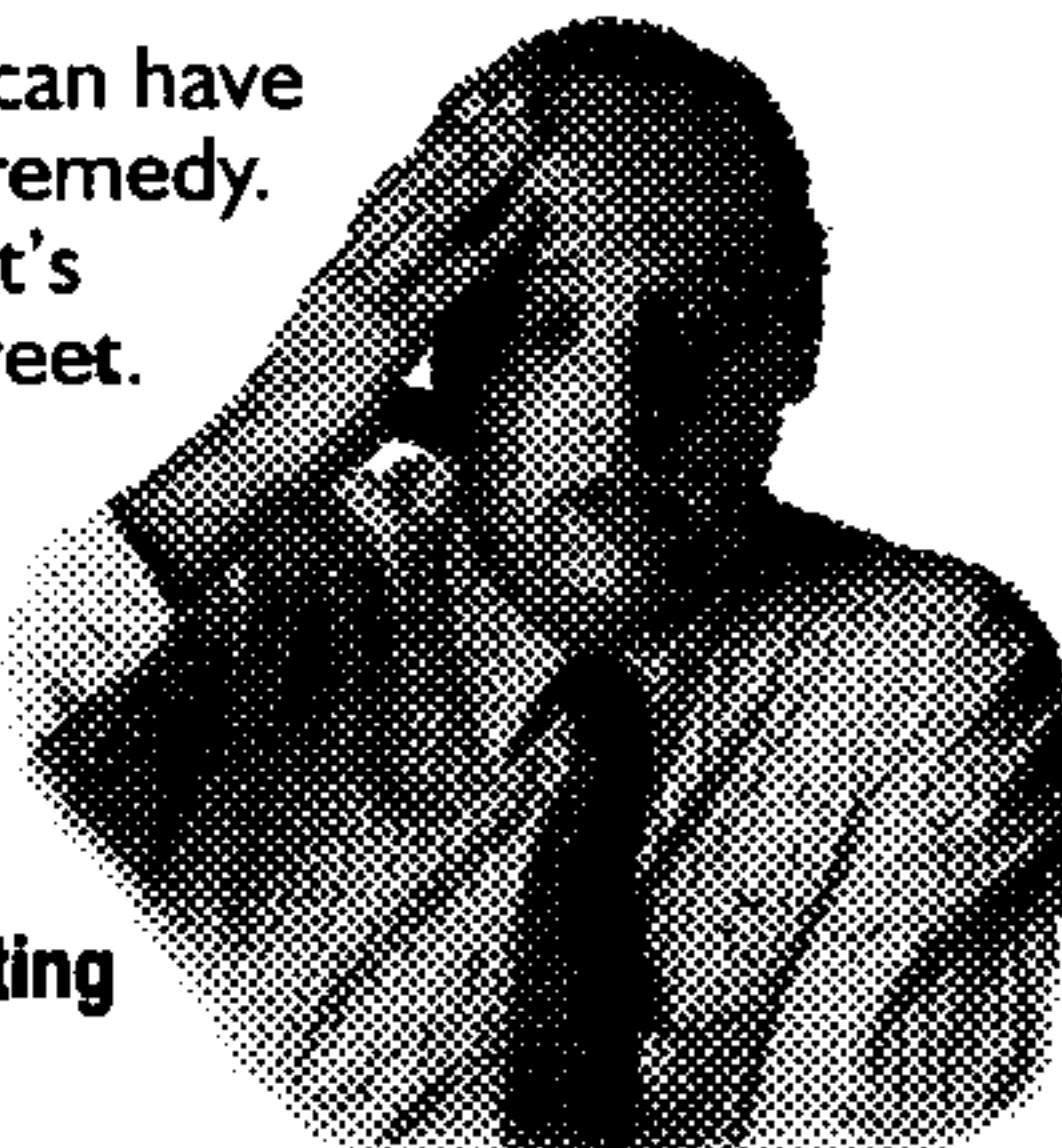
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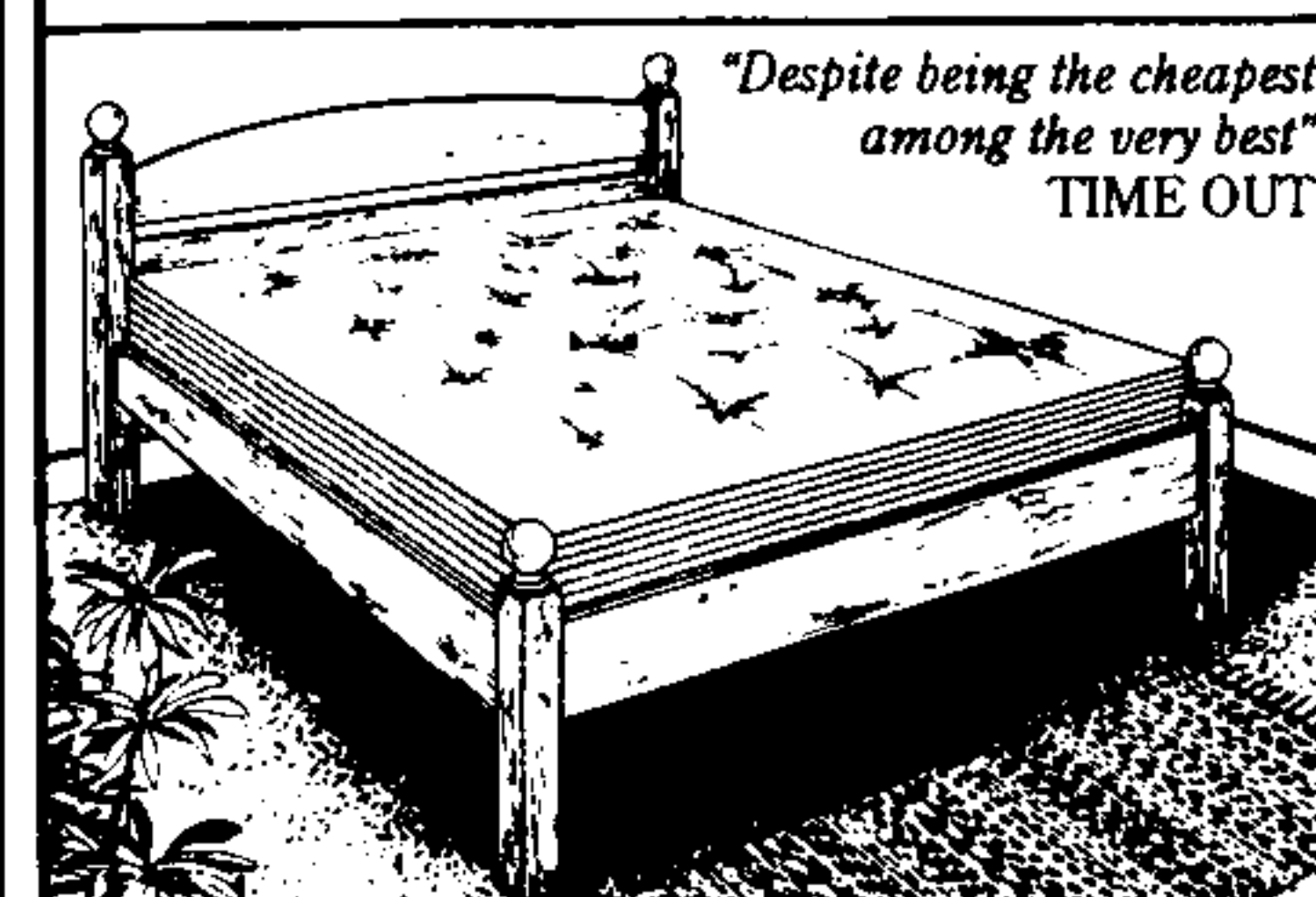
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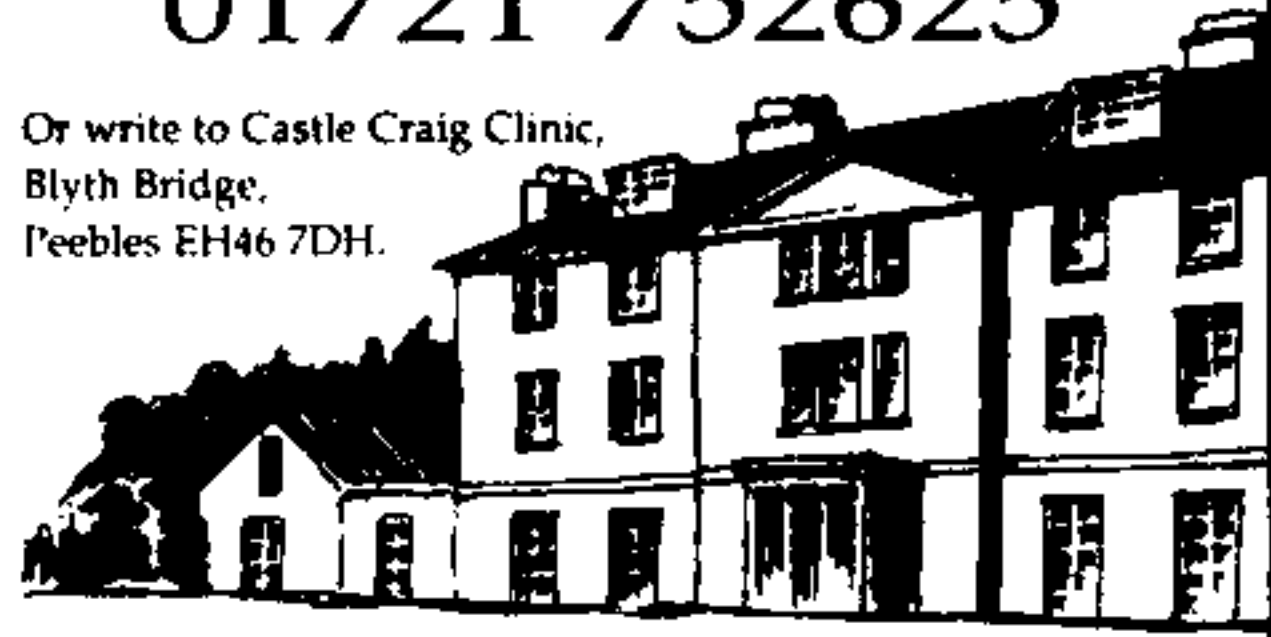
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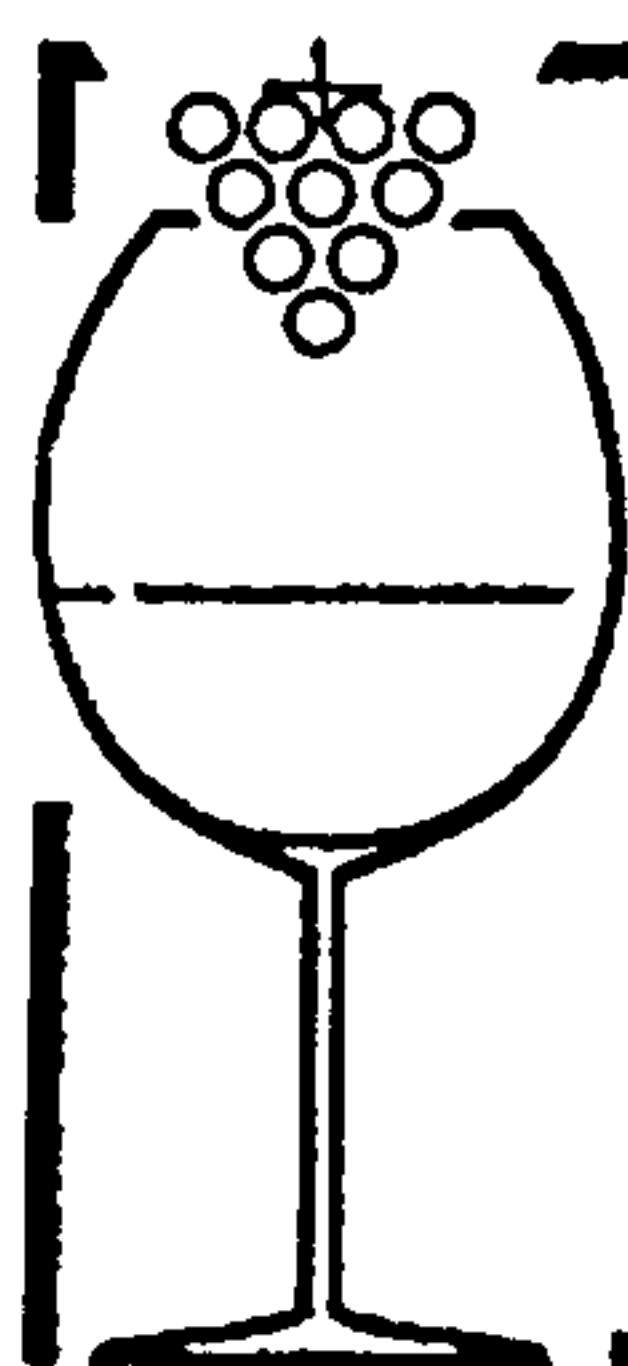
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I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.



2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ☐ Divorced ☐

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Age: _____ Height: _____

Occupation: _____

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Build: slight ☐ medium ☐ large ☐

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ☐ Attractive ☐ Average ☐

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Secondary Modern ☐

O Levels / GCSE's ☐ A levels ☐

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4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

☐ Affectionate ☐ Fashionable

☐ Serious ☐ Practical

☐ Considerate ☐ Conventional

☐ Shy ☐ Reliable

☐ Romantic ☐ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

☐ Do you prefer town life?

☐ Do you involve yourself with community activities?

☐ Do you have many friends of your own sex?

☐ Are you interested in current affairs?

☐ Are you looking for one special relationship?

☐ Do you like team activities?

☐ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?

☐ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?

☐ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?

☐ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

☐ Wining/Dining ☐ Jazz/Folk music

☐ Pubs ☐ Classical music

☐ Sports/Keep fit ☐ Theatre/Arts

☐ Entertaining ☐ Watching TV

☐ Reading ☐ Smoking

☐ Travelling ☐ Mixing with friends

☐ Walking ☐ Children

☐ Cinema ☐ D.I.Y. / Crafts

☐ Pets/Animals ☐ Gardening

☐ Pop music ☐ Sightseeing



7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age: _____ Maximum age: _____

Height: min. _____ max. _____ Don't mind ☐

Marital status: Single ☐ Divorced ☐

Widowed ☐ Separated ☐

Don't mind ☐

Build: slight ☐ medium ☐ large ☐

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ☐ Attractive ☐ Average ☐

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